



W A S P S



RUGBY

P R O M A G

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**WASPS v
GLOUCESTER**
Sunday 9th March 1997

ST GEORGE OR THE DRAGON?

Final Showdown for England & Wales



Wasps Welcome Gloucester

We offer a very warm welcome to our old friends from Gloucester, who are making their first visit to Loftus Road for today's game in the Courage Clubs Championship. Gloucester had a disappointing start to the season but things have improved considerably for them recently. They are one of only two sides to have beaten us this season - Harlequins are the other - and currently are comfortably clear of the relegation zone. They are also having a successful Cup run and will be at home to Leicester in the semi-final round on Saturday 29th March.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

At Kingsholm last October, with the late withdrawals of Chris Sheasby and Va'aiga Tuigamala through injury, we were made to pay dearly for our lack of penetration. Gloucester took an early lead through a Mapletoft penalty which Gareth Rees nullified three minutes later. The home side went ahead again through a try by Saverimutto, followed by another Mapletoft penalty to give them a 11-3 lead. A chip-through by Rees enabled Laurence Scrase to score for Wasps which, with Rees converting, brought the score to 11-10 at half-time.

Soon after the break, Catling scored for Gloucester and then Mapletoft and Rees traded penalties again. The second half was spoilt for us when one of our players was sent off for stamping and, although Andy Gomarsall scored a late try for Wasps, Mapletoft wrapped things up with an easy penalty to leave the final score 28-23.

We shall be hoping to gain revenge for that defeat this afternoon, while Gloucester will be every bit as keen to complete the double over us. It should be an enthralling and exciting encounter.

HOME & AWAY WINS

Our last two League games have seen us beat West Hartlepool away and then at home in the space of a fortnight. The home fixture at Wasps, originally scheduled for October, had been postponed because the visitors were unable to field a capable front row.

Away at Brierton Lane, Alex King scored in the seventh minute after Lawrence Dallaglio had broken through the defence, but West Hartlepool took the lead with two penalties from Chris John. Dallaglio and Mike White broke through again for Andy Gomarsall to score and, from the restart, a fine move involving Dallaglio, Paul Sampson and Gareth Rees brought a try for Chris Sheasby, while Rees added a penalty goal just before half-time. The second half began with tries from White, Simon Mitchell (against his former club) and Irish international Rob Henderson, who had settled in well on his debut. West never gave up and scored three excellent tries in the last quarter but we had a penalty try to add to our tally and the final score was 48-23.

Two weeks ago at Sudbury, playing the first half with a very strong wind behind us, Andy Reed opened our

account with a try after seven minutes and continued pressure brought a penalty try converted by Gareth Rees. Then a loose pass near West's line was intercepted by Stephen John, who ran the length of the field to score under the posts. A strong run by Rob Henderson brought a try for Rees, who added the conversion, and then Chris Sheasby scored from a pushover to bring the half-time score to 24-7. John scored a second try for West eight minutes into the second half, but Andy Gomarsall sent Jon Upton in at the corner and Guy Gregory scored by the posts, with the conversion from Rees making the final score 36-12.

Club coach Rob Smith said after the match: "I thought we fancied ourselves a bit at the start and we could have been more pragmatic and concentrated on getting some early points on the board. But I am delighted with the result, as it puts us a step nearer European qualification. When we are there, we can go flat out for the title."

This win took us four points clear of Leicester at the top of the Division One table, but they had last Tuesday night's game in hand. Unfortunately, our copy deadline for this programme means that, at the time of writing, I am unable to report on that evening's important League games between Gloucester and Northampton or (of crucial interest to us) Leicester v Sale.

NEW ARRIVAL

As we go to press, Kenny Logan, the current Scottish international winger, looked set to join Wasps and, if all has gone well, we hope to see him in today's side. Kenny will be our third Scottish cap in the first team squad this season, joining Andy Reed who played against Ireland last week and Damian Cronin, who was recalled to the bench. The holder of 29 caps, Logan's arrival adds to the recent signing of Ireland international Rob Henderson to more that make up for the loss of Tuigamala to Newcastle.

INTERNATIONAL DUTY

In addition to our Scottish representatives, Andy Gomarsall and Lawrence Dallaglio were on international duty last weekend for England against France at Twickenham. Dallaglio scored England's only try, a superb effort from some 35 metres out and very reminiscent of one he scored at Kingsholm last season.

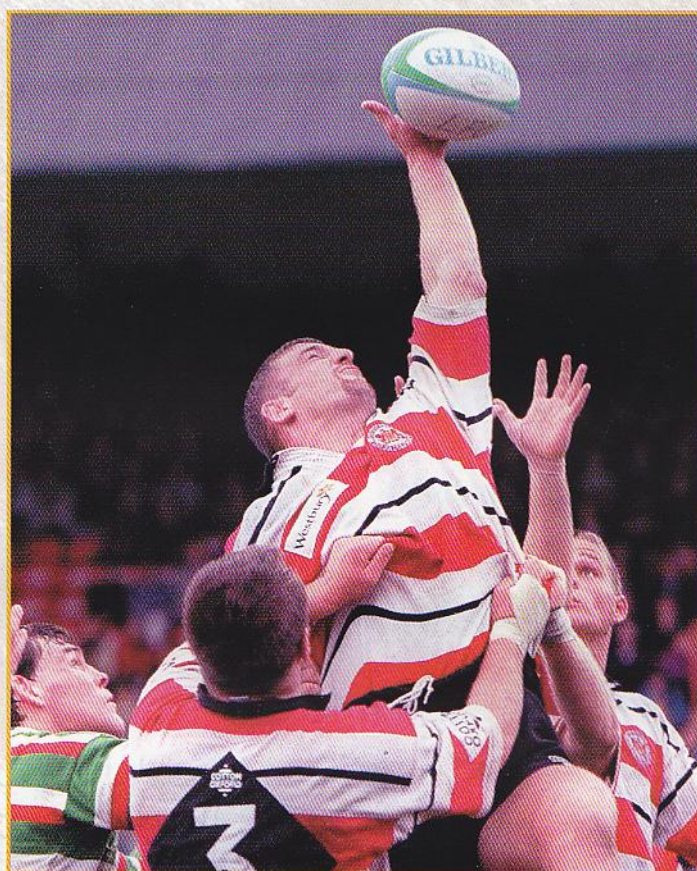
FIXTURE CHANGES

Because Leicester are still involved in the Pilkington Cup competition, our League game against them will now be played at Welford Road on the evening of Wednesday 2nd April at 7.30 pm. The fixture with Orrell is also likely to be changed because of the clash with the Hong Kong Sevens. Next Tuesday, we return to Sudbury to play against a team from the Royal Navy, kick-off at 7.30 pm.

KEVIN O'SHEA

Today's Opposition

The "Cherry & Whites" have enjoyed a great tradition of being a local club fielding local talent since Gloucester RFC was founded in 1873. Famed for their vociferous and enthusiastic supporters, Gloucester has always enjoyed great loyalty from players and fans alike - even when the side seemed destined to slip down into the Second Division just a short time ago.



During the 1994/95 season, it is fair to say that Gloucester's first XV failed to make an impact on Division One. They opened their account by losing away to Wasps by 45-8, with the home side scoring seven tries - the most that Gloucester have ever conceded in a League match. Wasps dismantled their visitors at Sudbury "in a fashion no London club has managed in living memory," commented Nick Cain in *The Daily Telegraph*. As Wasps' hooker and former Gloucester player Kevin Dunn explained after the fixture: "We have a new game plan at Wasps which involves moving the ball wide and using forwards as backs when required. Gloucester were unfortunate meeting us first game...everything went right for us."

Some good results followed, including home wins against West Hartlepool, Bristol and Orrell as well as a 9-3 defeat of Leicester, yet a number of matches were lost by narrow margins. There was a 14-10 win to celebrate at Harlequins and Gloucester held Bath to a 19-19 draw at the Recreation Ground, but the last Saturday of the League season saw Quins gain their revenge with Gloucester's highest ever home defeat by 17-28. The club ended the season placed seventh in the League One table.

History seemed ready to repeat itself as Gloucester made a disappointing start to the 1995/96 Courage Clubs Championship, with a string of losses in the League including a home defeat at the hands of Wasps by 26-15. In the second half of the season, however, under the firm guidance of their director of coaching Richard Hill, the former England and Bath scrum-half, there

was a stunning improvement. One of his first innovations was the introduction of a new, expanded playing structure affecting all club sides from Colts upwards. After Christmas, the first XV won a succession of five competitive games including a Pilkington Cup quarter-final in which Wasps were comprehensively beaten by 22-9, their only points coming from Guy Gregory's three penalty goals. In the semi-final round, Gloucester gave Cup-holders Bath a real run for their money before bowing out by 19-10. Wasps were seeking to avenge their Cup defeat when Gloucester came to Sudbury a month later, at the end of March 1996, and notched up three converted tries against a penalty kick and penalty try awarded to the visitors to make the final score 21-10.

Few sides perform better when the chips are down in front of a Kingsholm full house, as Wasps discovered to their cost when the two sides last met in October. Under the captaincy of Dave Sims, the Cherry & Whites will be looking to improve on last season's eighth position in the League, with the assistance and commitment of such players as full-back Mark Mapletoft, England A hooker Phil Greening, open-side Ian Smith and England U21 scrum-half Scott Benton.



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WASPS

Black with Gold Wasp

GLOUCESTER

Cherry & White

15 Gareth Rees (I)	Full Back	Chris Catling 15
14 Kenny Logan (I)	Right Wing	Mike Peters 14
13 Nick Greenstock	Centre	Don Caskie 13
12 Rob Henderson (I)	Centre	Martin Roberts 12
11 Shane Roiser	Left Wing	Mike Lloyd 11

10 Alex King	Outside Half	Mark Mapletoft 10
9 Andy Gomarsall (I)	Scrum Half	Scott Benton 9

1 Darren Molloy	Prop	Tony Windo 1
2 Simon Mitchell	Hooker	Phil Greening (I) 2
3 Will Green	Prop	Andy Deacon 3
4 Damian Cronin (I)	Lock	Rob Fidler 4
5 Andy Reed (I)	Lock	Dave Sims * 5
6 Lawrence Dallaglio * (I)	Flanker	Pete Glanville 6
7 Michael White	Flanker	Nathan Carter 7
8 Chris Sheasby (I)	No. 8	Simon Devereux 8

16 Martyn Wood	Replacements	Chris Fortey 16
19 Ian Dunston		Ed Pearce 17
18 Kevin Dunn		Laurie Beck 18
20 Matt Greenwood		

Referee

S Piercy (RFU/Yorkshire)

* Captain (I) International

Touch Judges

R Meerloo (RFU)

C Shutie (RFU)

Adviser: D Powell

Half Time

Full Time