

FOUNDED 1873

RUGBY

P R O M A G

Vol 1/17

£2.00


GLOUCESTER
V
SARACENS
5th April 1997



FDR
FIRST DIVISION
RUGBY

LAWS OF THE RUGBY JUNGLE

 **COURAGE** 
CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP

Westbury 



FOUNDED 1873



Saturday 5th April 1997 Kick-off 3.00pm

GLOUCESTER

Cherry & White

SARACENS

Black with Red Star & Crescent

15	Chris Catling	Full Back	Andy Tunningley	15
14	Mike Peters	Right Wing	Kris Chesney	14
13	Craig Emmerson	Centre	Phillippe Sella (I)	13
12	Martin Roberts	Centre	Steve Ravenscroft	12
11	Mike Lloyd	Left Wing	Richard Wallace (I)	11

10	Mark Mapletoft	Outside Half	Andy Lee	10
9	Scott Benton	Scrum Half	Kyran Bracken	9

1	Tony Windo	Prop	Tony Daly (I)	1
2	Phil Greening (I)	Hooker	Gregg Botterman	2
3	Andy Deacon	Prop	Paul Wallace (I)	3
4	Rob Fidler	Lock	Paddy Johns (I)	4
5	Dave Sims *	Lock	Tony Copsey (I)	5
6	Pete Glanville	Flanker	John Green	6
7	Nathan Carter	Flanker	Richard Hill (I)	7
8	Simon Devereux	No.8	Tony Diprose	8

16	Laurie Beck	Replacements	Phil Friel	
17	Don Caskie		Kevin Sorrell	
18	Audley Lumsden		Adrian Olver	
19	John Hawker		George Chuter	
20	Trevor Woodman		Mark Burrow	
21	Andy Stanley		Francois Pienaar (I)	

Referee

A Rowden (Berkshire/RFU)

(I) International

* Captain

Touch Judges

P Emerson (RFU)

K Williams (RFU)

WHAT A DIFFERENCE

In my formative Kingsholm years, the only Saracen we'd ever heard of was the one after which the old 'Saracen's Head' in Eastgate Street was named. Now, sadly, no more, it was a hostelry notable for the number of City Councillors who used to nip in there when the debates at the nearby Guildhall were getting too long and boring. Which was most of the time if the incidence of local representatives at any given moment was anything to go by. Then we became conscious of a North London club, vaguely Corinthian in character, who liked to run the ball about. When they started to visit Kingsholm, they were always a lively team, good for a pleasant afternoon, light relief from the sterner stuff provided by the likes of Coventry, Moseley and even Bedford. Well - 'Sarries' are here today, contesting the Courage League First Division. Whatever happened to the other three? I suppose we really began to take Saracens seriously, some years ago, when we were drawn to visit them in the Cup. Halfway into the game, we started to think "Hey! - these boys are no mugs!", and in the end, we were glad of a piece of inspiration from Nick Marment who ran in the winning try, too late in the game for real comfort. Since then, we have watched our respected and welcome guests go from strength to strength. Encounters at Kingsholm have always been close, and the most recent, of course, was the one we had to win - we thought - to stay in the First Division. As it turned out, the goal posts were moved, and we needn't have bothered. I don't think anyone takes on Saracens these days in total confidence. The Leicesters and Quins of this world may feign indifference, but today's 'Sarries' are quite capable of beating anyone. Indeed, I find it a little surprising that they're not higher in the table than they are: certainly, the pedigree of the new breed of imports argues a side that one would expect to be contesting the top spot. No one knows better than we do that it takes time for a restructured team to shake down, so perhaps we haven't seen the best of this one yet. Gloucester can, of course, claim the same. 1997/8 will probably be the season when one might more properly judge either side. Today, however, we should see an intriguing encounter: Gloucester could certainly do with a win, knowing that another two points will probably be sufficient to avoid the dreaded play-offs. Saracens, on the other hand, won't want us breathing down their necks in the table any more than we are already, so there are compelling reasons for both sides to give it all they've got. And quite apart from all that, it's good to welcome Saracens to Kingsholm once again. Have a great time, people!

Peter Arnold

COACH TO SALE

Yes, there will be one. £8.00 a throw. Ask in the office. There's no doubt that Sale are going well at the moment, and we wish them all the luck in the world at the Twickenham Final. However, they did stumble against Bristol, and you may well feel that anything 'Bris' can do, we can do better. No doubt the Cheshire side's supporters will point out that they were a couple of influential players short on the Bristol occasion, but the West Country lads were without Messrs. Regan, Corkery and Shaw, too, so things probably balanced out. We'd love to see (and hear) you there. If nothing else, it will be interesting to see how a Sale v. Gloucester Final might have worked out.

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY...

Well, not really. Some people seem to think that I ought to be resentful and even a little concerned about our egregious fanzine, 'Shedhead'. Not so. I'm on excellent terms with the editor, and regard the publication as a useful addition to the Kingsholm scene, certainly not in competition with the official programme, which does a totally different job. Accordingly, I am happy to accede to a request to publicise a little initiative they have going at the moment. The idea is to award a 'Shedhead Trophy' to the Gloucester Player of the Year. All supporters, 'Shedhead' purchasers or not, are invited to send in their nominations for the title. You can do that by jotting down your choice and sending it to 'SHEDHEAD', 59, Dinglewell, Gloucester; or handing it to Rob Gough in the 'Jockey'. It will be fascinating to see the result.

..AND A QUID PRO QUO

In return, 'Shedhead' are going to help me with a little machination of my own. For the Harlequins programme, April 19th, instead of my usual 'HOW JOE BLOGGS SEES IT' feature, I've arranged to have a question-and-answer session (on Licenced Premises, obviously) with Andy Mitchell, who is, as you know, Club Secretary. I'd like help from you in compiling the questions, as irreverent as you like.

If you have a query you'd like addressed to the guy who should know more about the day-to-day running of the Club than anyone, please give me a ring (01452 537880) or drop me a line at 74, Victoria Street, Gloucester GL1 4EW. Or you could E-mail me at PeteArnold@aol.com, or drop your question into the office, and they'll fax it to me. There's no deadline yet, because Andy and I haven't arranged a date to meet yet, but the sooner the better, obviously.

OH, WHAT A TANGLED WEB ...!

That Semi Final, plus the coyness of Leicester in fulfilling the originally-scheduled Courage League fixture, has landed us with a fraught and convoluted fixture list from here on in. Seven matches in just over a month, no less. Just to set the record straight and ensure that your diaries are up-to-date, I ought to set the remaining games out for you, 'for the avoidance of doubt', as the legal eagles say.

Tuesday, April 8th LEICESTER Home (Please note: 7.45pm kick-off)
Saturday, April 12th SALE Away
Saturday, April 19th HARLEQUINS Home
Saturday, April 26th, BRISTOL Home
Wednesday, April 30th BATH Away
Saturday, May 3rd NORTHAMPTON Away.

THE CLASS OF '72

Anyone who bought a programme on Saturday will have read and enjoyed the marvellous reminiscences of Mickey Booth, talking about that legendary Cup Quarter Final of March 1972. If you're new in the area, or support today's visitors, perhaps I should explain that Gloucester went to Old Deer Park to face a London Welsh side which boasted eleven Internationals, six of whom were members of the all-conquering British Lions Side which beat the All Blacks during the previous close season. What's more, against every expectation of everyone living more than a couple of miles from Gloucester Cathedral, they won. They then went on to beat Coventry and Moseley, and win the first ever RFU acknowledged Cup. Andy Mitchell tells me that that whole side - dubbed the 'Invincibles' by Mike Burton, has been invited along to Kingsholm on March 26th, the day of the Bristol game, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of that achievement.

For your delectation, here is that memorable side. Eric Stephens, John Dix, Richard Jardine, John Bayliss, Tom Palmer, Mickey Booth, Mike Burton, Mike Nicholls (capt.), Robin Cowling, Nigel Jackson, Jim Jarrett, John Haines, John Watkins and Mike Potter. Alan Brinn and Dick Smith had to cry off through injury.

Wonder how that lot would have got on in today's scene? Not half badly, suspect.

POSTAL TICKETS

As from now, the Office is accepting Postal Applications for tickets for the remaining home League games, that is Leicester next Tuesday (although it's a bit late for that one by now), Harlequins on the 19th, and Bristol on the 26th. Prices are: Stand, £14.00, Ground, £10.00, OAP Ground, £8.00 and Junior Ground, £6.00. But please don't forget to enclose the all-important SAE.

WELL DONE LADS

I think a word or two about last Saturday's Cup Semi Final may well be in order. Basically, I would like the lads to know that we're all disappointed by losing - but not by the display of sheer, committed rugby which the boys laid on for us. My own feeling is that it took a performance of genuine and admirable class by Joel Stransky, one of the giants of the world game, to beat us. I think the Tigers would have been hard pushed to get to Twickenham had it not been for that, and the great man himself is on record as saying that he knew the game was going to be hard, but he hadn't thought it would be *that hard*. He also intimated that he wasn't looking forward to coming here again on Tuesday evening all that much. Rugby was always a game of 'what ifs', and we had a fine example of that in the second half. Gloucester had just pulled themselves up to 13-15, thanks to that beautiful try, engineered and almost scored by Craig Emmerson's devastating run, and had weathered the predictable immediate assault by Leicester. Mark Mapletoft then essayed a drop goal that was well within his capabilities. From where I was, it looked for all the world as if it were going over. And then it didn't, missing by just about a couple of feet. A great effort, well worth trying, but ultimately unlucky. 'What if' I ask myself, it had gone between the posts? 16-15 up with a 12,000 crowd in full cry? Only about a quarter of the game to go? We shall never know. No doubt the players were sick about it all, but they really shouldn't reproach themselves. They did us proud.

And just one more thing, Premiership soccer grounds or not - there's no better scene in sport than Kingsholm, packed to the rafters, two excellent teams in contention, and the sun shining. If anyone doubts that, they should have been with us for the Pilkington Cup Semi Final, March 29th, 1997.

Peter Arnold

Gloucester News 8

Money Matters

The last Courage League One club to resist the temptation of chequebook rugby are about to give up the ghost.

Gloucester have decided they need three international backs in their side otherwise - to use director of rugby Richard Hill's own words - "The club will fold."

And it is not pressure from the outside which has sparked the revolution, rather players on the sharp end of matters that have decided enough is enough.

Hill took a brave stance at the beginning of the season by saying he wanted to build a team over three years in the old fashioned way which would stand Gloucester in good stead for years to come.

It was a case of following in the footsteps of the team that Jack built at Hill's old club Bath. But Rowell, then head coach at The Rec, was in the position where leagues did not need to be thought of, and the only domestic title was the John Player Cup and its successor the Pilkington Cup.

Now, as Gloucester prepare to meet the challenge of more of the rich boys of English rugby in Newcastle and Richmond, Hill has discovered that this philosophy, as sound as it is, does not really work in the highest level of the game in England.

That is why, in a matter of weeks, a special meeting will be held in the city where Hill will ask members of the club to vote in favour of bringing in a major financial backer to pump enough cash into the team so that he can go out and recruit these three internationals he is after.

Hill said: "It is going to happen so I am going ahead and looking for the players on the understanding that it is going to happen because, if it doesn't, then Gloucester, as a club, will fold us from next year."

And he will not be bringing in English players but looking abroad. This is not because Hill doesn't want good Englishmen but that those he would like to wear the famous Cherry and White are all tied-up.

He added: "The players I would like are under such massive contracts that to buy an English player is out of the question."

"But I have got to improve the squad, and I'm well underway to getting the people I need but I will have to go abroad for them."

Hill realises that Gloucester are in a no-win situation. A group of five key players have already indicated that they will leave the club if a backer is not found, although Hill has dismissed talk of at

least one of them - England's number two hooker Phil Greening - going as impossible because of the terms he is on.

However, lock Dave Sims has said he is quitting as captain at the end of the season and admitted that Coventry and other clubs have had talks with him about his future.

Greening said: "We want to be battling for titles instead of trying to fight off relegation every season."

That is why it is imperative that a money man is found to keep the club going. Hill is confident that one is there. If he is wrong, however, it would be a great shame to see Gloucester slide into obscurity after all the hard work that has gone on at Kingsholm to turn them from paupers into princes this season.

