

GLOUCESTER

The Cherry and Whites



GLOUCESTER V SARACENS

£2.00

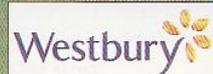
15th March 1998 KO 3.00pm

Vol 2/15

Today's Match Day Sponsor: Allied Mills



EagleStar



WELCOME TO



Gloucester Rugby Football Club

Welcome to Gloucester Rugby Football Club

Top of the table and chasing a league and cup double, today's visit of Saracens to Kingsholm provides the sternest of tests.

Under the coaching of South Africa's World Cup winning captain Francois Pienaar, Saracens have been transformed from a dangerous team capable of pulling off shock results, to a side easily capable of becoming the Allied Dunbar Premiership Champions, although Rob Andrews Newcastle may yet have something to say about that.

I've heard it said that Saracens and some other sides, have bought their way to success. Well I don't buy into that theory. I agree a sure financial footing has helped but to achieve the

sort of lofty position that Saracens are now in, a team much more than a healthy bank balance. From what I've seen of them, Saracens play some fine rugby and have the determination and team spirit, that's needed to grind out results.

If we are to achieve the success that we want to here at Kingsholm we could do much worse than to look very closely at today's opponents from London.

But my admiration for Saracens as a club doesn't mean that I don't expect the Cherry and Whites to maintain the fine run that we've put together in recent weeks at Kingsholm. Several of our players that have been dogged by injury are now either back to full fitness or at least well on their way to it. The fact that we've still managed to perform very

well with so many players unavailable shows just how far we've come as a club. In years past I am not sure that we would have been so strong without players like Phil Greening, Dave Sims and Philippe Saint André for weeks on end. It's a sign that we now have considerable strength in depth in our squad, something that's an essential requirement these days for Premiership rugby.

In truth there's plenty to be positive about at the moment here at Kingsholm. Yes, I accept there have been disappointments, how could I forget our early exit from the Tetley Bitter Cup? But overall we are stronger and fitter than we were at the start of the season, and I mean both on and off the pitch. A lot of work and effort has been, and still is being, put in. We are beginning to reap the rewards, and will do into the future.

So there's much to cheer about at the moment, and I'm sure a romping good win against the League leaders would cheer the hearts of all Cherry and Whites.

John Fidler

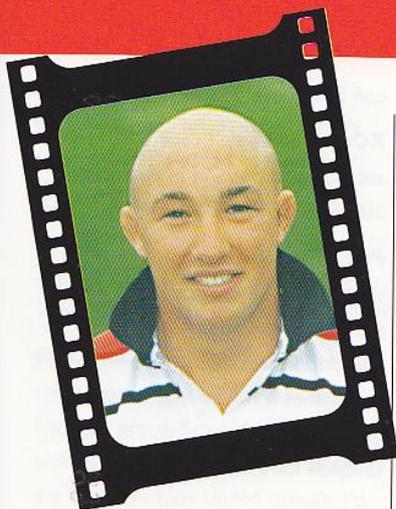


Gloucester v Saracens, 15th March 1998

The Player Interview



Phil Greening



Gloucester's prodigal son is set to return to first class rugby. After a none too brilliant start to the season and a succession of injuries, Phil Greening is ready for action - though team manager John Fidler said earlier this week that he was not yet match fit for the Premiership. Phil clearly understands what it means to be a professional and there is no doubting his ambitions. He retains the old confidence but his enforced absence has given the young hooker time to reflect on his game and we should expect to see a player absolutely determined to improve on the old model. The interview was conducted just over a week ago by Kingsholm Chronicle, the unofficial web site on the internet for

Gloucester Rugby Football Club.

Kingsholm Chronicle: *You've been unlucky with injuries this season. Is that run of bad luck over?*

Phil Greening: Hopefully everything is sorted out now. I had a cruciate ligament problem to start with and then I pulled a hamstring. I did a lot more damage than Tony Windo did. On the first night of training I tried to do extra to catch up so I went with the United squad and I did it training with them. It wasn't the best way to get injured and it's been very frustrating.

KC: *With Chris Forsey showing such good form and Neil McCarthy fit again, how are you going to force your way into the team?*

PG: I haven't the right to go straight back in but hopefully I'm still thought of as the number one hooker and if not, I'll just have to make sure I am.

KC: *How will you achieve that?*

PG: By being more professional and showing what I can do in training and in the games I'm selected for.

KC: *How do you rate your England chances in the short term?*

PG: I've been out for 16 weeks now but at the start of the Five Nations I was picked for the squad without even playing a game. So hopefully I'm still

in the back of (the England selectors') minds but as long as I can get back into the Gloucester side, start playing and keep fit, it shouldn't be a problem.

KC: *It's looking good for Gloucester on the International front at the moment.*

PG: Things are getting better and people are starting to notice Gloucester now. It's been a big turnaround really because this time last year Phil Vickery was ready to pack it all in as he was injured and couldn't break into the First XV. Now he's having the sort of season I had last year. Being injured has been a nightmare especially when you see people like Cockerill and Dorian West playing for England and I don't consider them to be anywhere near the level that I am. It's so frustrating to know that I would have got a few more caps and played with Phil Vickery. That would have been nice because we've played together since playing for England at U16 level.

KC: *Phil Vickery has stated that you were instrumental in bringing him to Gloucester, as have some other players.*

PG: It's been nice actually because people like Ed Pearce, Trevor Woodman, Chris Catling and Steve Ojomoh - who rang me to see what I

PHIL GREENING



If Desire Were Caps,

thought about the move - respect the things I say.

KC: *What do you think of Ojomoh signing for Gloucester?*

PG: I think its been good. No disrespect to the boys who have been playing in the back row this season but we've been needing more strength and ball handling skills. We've got the backs sorted out now, we just need more link men rather than a whole back row of big grafters. You need a balance of the two and with Steve coming in it's going to benefit the team.

KC: *How have this season's new signings settled in at the club?*

PG: Times have changed things here. I remember when I came here from Spartans no-one would talk to me and there was still a big clique. But now new players are being accepted, even those from Bath! It's good that the club is going that way and it's a reflection of the professional attitude of the players.

KC: *What improvements do you think the team will have to make to win the Championship?*

PG: We're getting there slowly but it's new territory for us. I think the players need to have more ambition - some of them are happy just to be playing for Gloucester. The main point is that we always see ourselves as the

underdogs. When we beat teams like Leicester and Northampton we feel like it's a cup upset but it's not. We're in the same league as them and we should expect to beat teams like that. We're slowly getting into a winning way and starting to realise that we



can beat these people.

KC: *It must help to see Gloucester in such a good position in the table instead of in the relegation zone.*

PG: One of our main aims at the start of the season was to get into the top four by the end of the year. If we can start to win away and win the last few games it will be tremendous for us. Gloucester hasn't been in that situation for some years.

KC: *You've continued to coach at Spartans this season.*

PG: Yes, all last season and this I've been coaching the U16s and there is some tremendous talent there. We've been playing the likes of Bath and Bristol and beating them by 10-15 points. Gloucester haven't got a set-up like that but Richard Hill is looking at having an U17 squad as a school of excellence. I think it needs to be done.

KC: *How important is it for you to retain a link to your old club?*

PG: I think it's nice to go somewhere where you still get called "Fat Phil" and no-one really cares what you've done because you're still Phil Greening to them. It keeps your feet on the ground.

KC: *How big is the step up to international rugby?*

PG: Its a tremendous leap. It's faster, you have less time to think on

He'd Have A Million



the ball, the pace and the hits, its a considerable jump. You don't really realise it until you get involved in it.

KC: *There was a lot of speculation couple of seasons ago about the possibility of you leaving Gloucester. What would make you leave the club?*

PG: If we went down - which I can't see happening - or if I was unhappy here. If I couldn't get back into the team then I couldn't afford to sit on the bench or play United games, I'd have to look somewhere else for first team rugby. I can't play second fiddle to anybody.

KC: *Have we seen the best of Phil Greening yet?*

PG: No, nowhere near. This injury has made me look back on everything and I've had time to look at what I've done. It's made me a lot more hungry. In the past I've gained caps by virtue of my talent alone and I've not really slogged too hard to get it. Other England players tell me what they do for training but by comparison I've done nothing. I really want to get back and make a name for myself. I'm always looking to improve every part of my game and no-one's seen the best of me yet!

KC: *Who do you rate as your hardest opponent?*

PG: No-one this year! It's got to be Graham Dawe. He helped me a hell

of a lot. I was 18 and I had just come back from an England Colts tour of Canada and two days later I had to play Bath at the Rec. He taught me a hard lesson that day because he absolutely stuffed me! Since then I haven't been stuffed because of what I learnt from him. When I played him later in the season I took one against the head. We talked about it afterwards and commented on how much I'd progressed. I told him it was thanks to him!

KC: *Which has been your most memorable game?*

PG: The one that sticks in my mind is the game against Bath early last season here at Kingsholm. That was one of my best games and I really enjoyed that one. Firstly I punched Ojomoh in the first minute and gave him a cut eye - so that was quite nice! Then I sold a dummy to Jason Robinson and scored and when Phil de Glanville tried to gas me on the outside I stuffed him. Little things like that make it one of my favourite games.

KC: *Thank you very much Phil.*

Kingsholm Chronicle can be found on the Internet at:
<http://www.glawster.demon.co.uk>



TILTING FOR



THE TOP

The problem about being Top Gun is that there's always a bunch of aspiring quick-draw artists waiting to pop you off your pedestal. Bath have known about this for years, but it must be a new experience for Saracens.

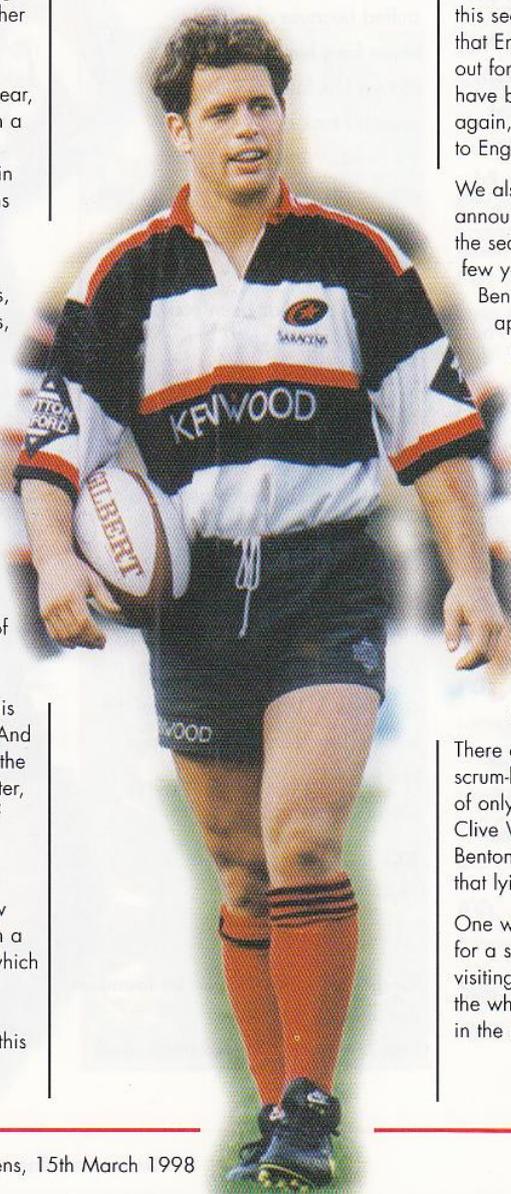
In some ways 'Sarries' are the surprise package of the season. Back in August the speculation was all about whether Wasps could hold on to their title, could Bath bounce back after their unwontedly mediocre season last year, and surely Leicester must be in with a chance this time round. No one doubted that Newcastle would be in the reckoning, but how about Quins and even Sale, who had surprised everyone in 1996/7.

No one really considered Saracens, which was odd, because there was, and is, no doubting the quality of the squad the club had assembled. Any side which can field Messrs. Lynagh, Sella, Richard Hill, Bracken, and a whole clutch more, simply has to be reckoned with.

As someone said at the time, 'You can buy a club, but you can't buy a team.' It was always going to take time for such a disparate set of talents to shake down into a real, functioning unit, as Newcastle, a season or so ahead of Sarries in this regard, had amply demonstrated. And the London clubs don't really have the tribal element we enjoy in Gloucester, an element which instills a sense of belonging, of being part of a sub-culture in its own right.

This shaking-down process has now finished. We are faced, today, with a very formidable unit indeed, one which has walked all over just about everyone they've encountered this season. The intriguing thing about this

game is whether Gloucester's passion and commitment, allied to the undoubted and increasing quality of the side, and of the rugby it is playing, especially at home, can put one across a team which now has the all-important self-belief, as well as the talent on display.



It's tempting to state that Gloucester always like to be underdogs, but that isn't quite true. When did we ever consider ourselves to be underdogs at Kingsholm? Ask Leicester and Northampton.

Saracens, like Gloucester, have had more than their fair share of injuries this season. It's a shame, for example, that England No.8, Richard Hill, is now out for the rest of the season. It would have been good to see him here again, and his injury is certainly a loss to England's Five Nations chances.

We also hear that Michael Lynagh has announced his retirement at the end of the season. Ever since he came here, a few years ago, with the Italian club, Benetton Treviso, we have learned to appreciate his silk-smooth skills at outside-half. Perhaps he isn't quite as quick as he used to be, but he can still ignite a game, and there's no doubt that he is still one of the two or three best kickers of a rugby ball in the world.

That's interesting, too. He's currently sitting at sixth in the National points scoring list, just three places behind our own Mark Mapletoft, a point I don't suppose is lost on either of them.

There could be a good confrontation at scrum-half, too. Kyran Bracken is one of only two players in that position who Clive Woodward rates above Scott Benton, and Scotty isn't going to take that lying down.

One way and another, we might be in for a stormer today. We hope the visiting contingent thoroughly enjoys the whole affair, whatever happens out in the middle.

Peter Arnold

MATCH DAY



Mascots

Jack & Tomas Baker



Jack Baker is 7 years old. He was born in West Wales. He spent the first 4 years in Newent, Gloucester. He is presently attending Saunders foot primary school. Jack's hobbies are rugby, football and cricket. His favourite player is Terry Fanaloua.

Tomas Baker is 5 years old. Born in Gloucester Tom lists as his favourite team Gloucester! Having spent a short time in N.Z. He also favours Canterbury.

Having attended Kingsholm from an early age this honour will be most memorable and always cherished. Especially with a Gloucester victory!



Apology

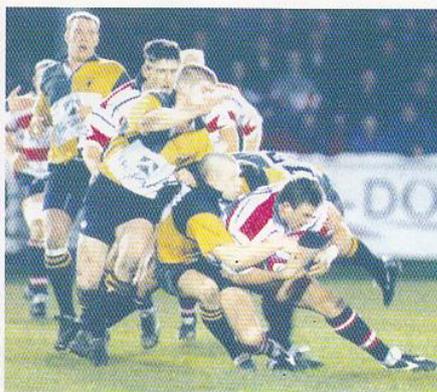
Our Mascot for the Wasps match on Wednesday night was Ashley Long not Ashley Young, as appeared in the programme

Referee

Graham Hughes



Born in April 1959 in Runcorn, Cheshire, Graham is currently in his 13th season as a referee with the Manchester Society and his third season on the RFU Panel of Referees, refereeing at National division level and having refereed Holland in a Cup Qualifiers. He started refereeing after stopping playing after a back injury, later rectified by the removal of his left kidney in 1989. Graham is the Head of information Technology and Computer Administration at Victoria Community High School in Crewe. He is married, with two daughters and one son, who is the Captain of Sandbach U12's, Cheshire champions for four years.



In the programme for the Richmond match last month we inadvertently suggested that the Gloucester player with the ball in the picture left was former Gloucester scrum-half Charlie Mulraine, we got it wrong! It is infact Martin Roberts. Sorry Martin.

TailPiece

Can you imagine the conversation among the Olney Committee early last week ?

'Chipping Norton have cried off.'
'Oh dear ! Can you get another fixture ?'

' Think so. Gloucester United are looking for a game.'

' Nah ! They won't come here !'
'You never know !'

And of course, United did. Giving a run out to some walking wounded. Philippe St. André, Phil Greening, Dave Sims, Martin Kimber....

The last thing Olney, usually famous only for its annual Pancake Race, expected was to have players of that calibre running out on their modest little recreation ground this season. But I'll bet the Olney Clubhouse was the place to be last Saturday evening.



Many thanks to
today's Match Day
Sponsor: Allied Mills



Sunday 15th March 1998 Kick-off 3.00pm

GLOUCESTER 38
Cherry & White

SARACENS 15
Black, Red star & crescent

15	CHRIS CATLING	Full Back	GAVIN JOHNSON (I)	15
14	BRIAN JOHNSON T	Right Wing	MATTHEW SINGER	14
13	TERRY FANOLUA (I)	Centre	RYAN CONSTABLE (I)	13
12	RICHARD TOMBS (I)	Centre	STEVE RAVENSCROFT	12
11	PHILIPPE SAINT-ANDRE (I)	Left Wing	RICHARD WALLACE (I)	11
10	MARK MAPLETOFT (I) ^{SC} _{HP}	Outside Half	MICHAEL LYNAGH (I)	10
9	SCOTT BENTON T	Scrum Half	MARCUS OLSEN	9
1	TONY WINDO T	Prop	ROBERTO GRAU (I)	1
2	CHRIS FORTEY	Hooker	GEORGE CHUTER	2
3	PHIL VICKERY (I)	Prop	PAUL WALLACE (I)	3
4	ROB FIDLER T	Lock	PADDY JOHNS (I)	4
5	MARK CORNWELL	Lock	DANNY GREWCOCK (I)	5
6	PETE GLANVILLE*	Flanker	BEN STURNHAM	6
7	NATHAN CARTER	Flanker	FRANCOIS PIENAAR (I)	7
8	SIMON DEVEREUX	No. 8	TONY DIPROSE (I)	8
16	AUDLEY LUMSDEN	Replacements	TBA	16
17	IAN SANDERS		TBA	17
18	DAVE SIMS		TBA	18
19	NEIL McCARTHY		TBA	19
20	STEVE OJOMOH (I)		TBA	20
21	ADEY POWLES		TBA	21
22				22

Referee

G. HUGHS
(MANCHESTER RFU)

Touch Judges

R.C. REES (RFU)
L. BRYANT (RFU)



CLUB

NEWS



**GLOUCESTER
AWAY GAMES**

VS



LEICESTER
21ST MARCH
KO 1.00PM

VS



LONDON IRISH
24TH MARCH
KO 7.15PM

VS



HARLEQUINS
29TH MARCH
KO 3.00PM

C & G NEXT SATURDAY



There's silverware up for grabs. If we win next Saturday, we'll have one hand on it.

But it's a difficult assignment, because Leicester are never easy to beat on their own patch, and they'll be smarting over the defeat we inflicted here, a while ago.

However, the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup is a little different. Organised to coincide with the Five Nations matches, it deprives sides with strong representation at International and 'A' level of their star players. That's not all bad. It gives aspiring performers a chance to strut their stuff, and also to play alongside their more experienced colleagues in a truly competitive situation.

Both of next Saturday's Semi Final sides at Welford Road are going to be hard hit by International calls, and on paper, the Tigers will be suffering worse than we shall. Indeed, one report I read said that Leicester might only be able to call on Joel Stransky out of their whole preferred senior XV. Personally, I don't think things will be that bad for them, although last Saturday's sending off of Martin Corry won't do them any good. Anyway, there ain't no such animal as a weak Tigers side, especially at home.

It should be a fascinating game, and wouldn't it be nice if Gloucester could win the trophy which bears the name of our own local company? And we could, you know. History says so. We have a record of being the first side to win such competitions. Remember we were the first to win the RFU's Challenge Trophy, now the premier Cup competition in the country. We were the first English side to win the old Daily Mail Anglo-Welsh Merit Table pennant. We were also the first to win the National Tens Tournament, now sadly defunct.

Naturally, we'll be sending at least one coach. It will be leaving Kingsholm at 9.30am next Saturday, because the kick-off is at 1.30. That, presumably, gives you time to watch Phil Vickery doing his thing against Scotland, and I can think of worse

places to do that than in the Leicester clubhouse.

Tickets for the coach are on sale in the office now. So are match tickets. You can purchase a reserved Stand ticket, which is situated behind the posts, for £12.00, unreserved seats at £8.00, or standing ground tickets for £8.00 as well. Incidentally, the office is open from 10.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Why not go along and give the lads a boost.?

AND FOR OUR NEXT TRICK...



Don't forget that we're away to London Irish on the Tuesday after that, March 24th, to be pedantic. Again, we'll be running a coach at £8.00 a throw, if there's sufficient call for it.

It's not such an easy assignment as a glance at the table might suggest. There seems no reason why the Irish shouldn't be at full strength, and rather like Gloucester, they are notoriously much more difficult to beat at home than they are away. We've usually managed to put it across them at Sunbury in recent seasons, but it's often been an uncomfortably close-run thing.

Anyway, the London Irish clubhouse is a superb place to sink a couple of an evening. Especially if you don't have to do the driving.

LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

We all know that the Gloucester clubhouse is the place to be after a game these days, what with entertainment being laid on and all, but I hadn't realised that our fame had spread as far as New Zealand. Yet such is the case, as is amply demonstrated by the two photographs hereby reproduced.

They come from a convivial soul named Tim Male (at least, I think that's what the signature on the note says. Could be 'Mace'), of Stoke Nelson, New Zealand. The occasion was the after-match libations at the visit of New Zealand Youth to take on South West Under 21's, back last year



Tim is the big guy standing on the far right of picture number 2.

Obviously, the proverbial good time was being had by all, not least by the assembled beauties of our bar staff.

This occasion was far from unique, but it isn't often that our visitors go to the trouble of sending us photographs evidence of any such enjoyable event.

Thanks, Tim! Come back and see us sometime.

GANGWAY!

It's about time I issued the usual warning about not standing in gangways or on steps to watch the game. This is an edict from the Emergency Services, and quite understandable it is, especially on a day when the ground is as packed as we confidently expect it will be today.

And please don't get stroppy with a Steward if he has to move you on. He's doing a difficult job, and wouldn't shift you if he didn't have to.

WELL DONE THE LADS!

Congratulations to Rob Jewell, who scored a try, and Chris Hall on distinguishing themselves in the England Colts win over Loughborough Freshers. I should think they could well feature in the sterner matches

which lie just around the corner.

Felicitations, too, to Simon Danielli, Sean Marsden and Ross Blake on making the 23-strong squad which is down to play Scotland at Glasgow at 18-group level.

Good to see that our strength in depth extends all the way down the line.

ADVANCE WARNING

Our next home Premiership game is scheduled for April 11th, when we meet Newcastle. They tell me that the game is on Sky, so that means an early kick off AT 2.15pm.

The week after, on April 18th, we have a visit from Bath, and you won't want to miss that. Neither will anyone else, which is why it has been decided that it will be an all-ticket affair. Season tickets will be honoured, of course.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE



The Gloucester Central Division of St. John Ambulance will be taking up a collection to-day both before the match and during half-time when supporters are invited to aim their cash at the traditional 'blanket'.

Grateful thanks are extended to the GRFC for allowing this important annual fund raising effort, the proceeds from which will be used towards up-dating a much needed new ambulance.

The generosity of the 'Glawster' crowd has always been much appreciated as in April '97 when we received £912.13p
THANK YOU.

First-aid training courses for general public duties and for statutory First Aid at Work are regularly available - St. John Ambulance, at 67, London Road, Gloucester GL1 3HF. Tel. 01452 527227 and they will be very pleased to supply full details of these and many other opportunities, including classes for the 7 - 16 year old age range.

SCHOOLS RUGBY DIARY LIST

Dave Pointon, Schools Liaison Officer and Coach for Gloucester Rugby Football Club is busy with a whole host of events for talented youngsters.

Under 16 players from Gloucestershire & South-West Coaching Session

Thursday 19th March, start 7.00pm
Dave Pointon and several of the first team squad will be giving a coaching session at Kingsholm

Under 17 Trial

Friday 27th March, start 6.30pm
Local Clubs and Schools will be nominating their best under 17 age group players for a trial. The successful players will go on to represent Gloucester Rugby Football Club in mid April.

Schools Week

Tuesday 31st March
Gloucester Schools Under 15 Final, kick off 4.30pm
Gloucester Schools Under 16 Final, kick off 5.45pm

Wednesday 1st April

Gloucestershire County Club Under 14 Final, kick off 5.00pm
Sponsored by Midland Bank

Thursday 2nd April

Gloucester Schools Under 15 v Cheltenham Schools Under 15, kick off 4.45pm

Friday 3rd April

Place Kicking Competition, start 5.00pm
All schools have been invited to send their champion of the Under 15 age group or below. The Final is scheduled to take place either before the Gloucester v Newcastle game or at half time.

Saturday 18th April

Junior Rugby Curtain raiser before the Gloucester v Bath game
1.10 - 2.00pm

Sunday 10th May

New Image Rugby Festival
Twenty local primary schools will be enjoying a festival of new image rugby,
2pm - 5pm.

Player Profile



NEIL McCARTHY



If ever a player emerged from the shadows, it's Neil McCarthy, known to his friends in the Gloucester squad as 'Chief'.

When he arrived at Kingsholm, together with scrum-half Ian Sanders, it was assumed that



he had been taken on as cover for Phil Greening, who was England's heir apparent at hooker at the time. And so he was, but it rapidly became clear that there was considerably more to the situation than that. He didn't just cover for Phil – he pushed him hard for his first team spot. In fact, on one memorable occasion, he became a tactical replacement for the dynamic Phil when the situation seemed to call for Neil's skills rather than Phil's.

We all came to acknowledge that, in Neil McCarthy we have a hooker who can bear comparison with almost anyone in Premiership One, and when Phil Greening's persistent injury problems finally had to be addressed, those of us who simply watch from the grandstand or the terraces weren't too discouraged by the proposition that Neil McCarthy was in for a fair old run.

Unfortunately, that wasn't to be, because a vindictive fate decreed that, just at that point, Neil joined the injury list, too. That gave Chris Fortey his opportunity, and that's a whole other story: suffice it to say that Gloucester now has three first-quality hookers to call upon.

Twenty-four year-old Neil McCarthy arrived at Gloucester amid taunts, from some quarters, that Richard Hill had been reduced to taking on a whole raft of Bath discards, but that's hardly fair. He was born in Slough, and actually played for Cirencester before being seduced away to the Rec So his original allegiance is much more towards Gloucestershire than Somerset

Standing just a fraction under six feet tall, and weighing in at around 17 stone, Neil is a formidable presence around the field. His most

memorable rugby moment was when he was a member of the England U21 side which beat their New Zealand counterparts, and he lists his most admired player as Graham Dawe, which isn't really surprising. He makes no bones about the fact that his ambition is to win a full England Cap or two.

Before becoming a full-time rugby player, Neil was a bricklayer, and a stonemason, so if his rugby skills ever desert him, I'm sure he could find a job at the Cathedral, which is famous for that sort of discipline. He has a partner named Lucy, and says that his favourite film is Pulp Fiction. He confesses to being a fan of the bands, Ocean Colour Scene and Lighthouse Family. Says he'll eat just about anything.

And if you still doubt his allegiance to Gloucester, consider this. He lists his favourite colours as cherry and white

