

GLOUCESTER

The Cherry and Whites



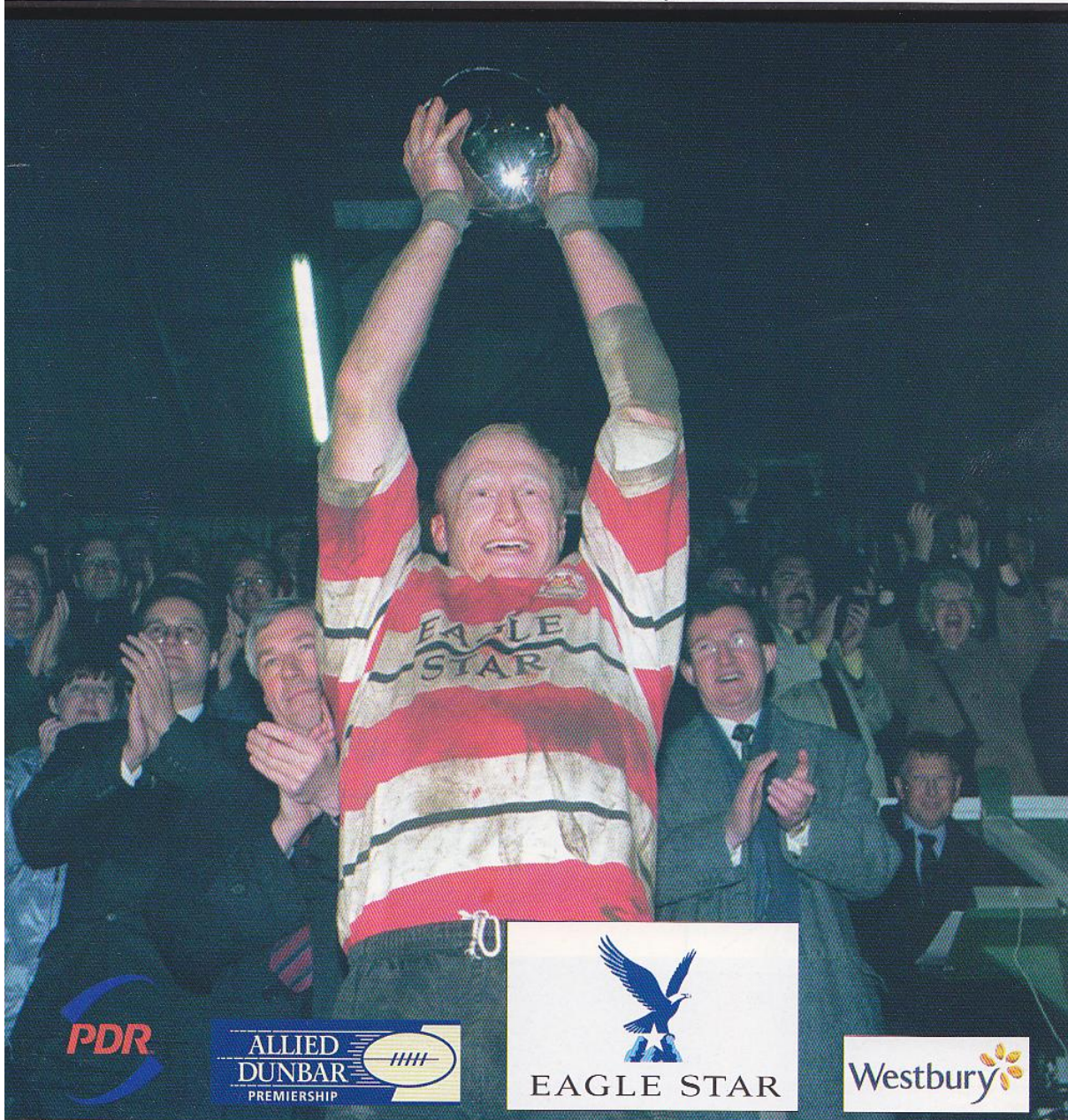
GLOUCESTER V NEWCASTLE

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Today's Match Day Sponsor: Legal & General



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How Katie saw it

Entertainment, Excitement and a Hangover too!

What a privilege to be able to write in the programme just a week after Gloucester won their first 15-a-side trophy, for well over a decade.

That victory over Bedford in the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup final was superb.

Both sets of fans were in full voice from before the kick-off, both teams were at full throttle from the word "go" and the action and atmosphere were five star all the way through.

It was the game with everything - strong forward play, slick' back play, pace, power, bravery and a never-say-die attitude from both teams

Many players, coaches, supporters and journalists from around the country have belittled the Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup in it's first season, but anyone who was lucky enough to be at the finals knows it is a competition which meant a great deal to the team and supporters.

Okay so it is not the Premiership or the Tetley's Bitter Cup, but we always knew it had a worthwhile role to play to supply meaningful club rugby or international weekends - and now we also know it provides entertainment, excitement and hangover too.

Everyone connected with Gloucester is now hoping that the C&G trophy will soon have more silverware to keep it's company in the Kingsholm trophy cabinet.

In the last two seasons, Gloucester have made great strides. Two years ago, we were all biting our nails as the team came through yet another relegation battle.

This time last year, Gloucester had survived in League One by a much more comfortable margin, but had still not exactly set the world on fire. They had also reached the cup semi-final two years in a row, which was both encouraging and soul-destroying.

Now Gloucester have a team which is

looking to finish fourth or fifth in the league and which performed well in Europe. The improvement in the league position is extremely important in itself, but to have won the C&G Cup is also crucial because the players have a tangible reward for their efforts. The coaches and players have worked tremendously hard to claw their way up the pecking order and now they have a

happy at Kingsholm.

One major thing which certainly stops some of them from seeking their fortunes in pastures new is the support of the fans - and that was priceless in the C&G final.

Another factor which helps keep the players contented is the fact that they feel Gloucester is a place where they



trophy and winners' medals they can look at with pride.

Winning this competition is a good achievement and hopefully it will give the squad the confidence and appetite to take another step forward next season.

The imports Richard Hill brought in last summer have fitted into the squad superbly and strengthened the club with their skill and knowledge.

The fitness work being done by Paul Balsom and the squad has taken the club forward too .

Now the club must make sure the current squad is kept together and strengthened on one of two areas to improve it's depth, and then we can expect to see Gloucester excel in more competitions next season.

Hopefully this Cheltenham & Gloucester success will be another factor to add to the list of things which keep the players

can develop their individual careers. This season I have been delighted to see Phil Vickery earn his first cap and Scott Benton establish himself as England's number three scrum-half and come close to a cap.

Rob Fidler has also taken a massive stride and has established himself as a key England A player. Vickery, Benton and Fidler should all be included in this summer's England tour party and Phil Greening - after taking a step back in the first half of the season for various reasons - it now on the ascendancy again and may also make the trip.

Improving individuals, talented new blood and now a trophy.... it all adds up to some big strides in the right direction for Gloucester and let's hope the upwards curve continues next season.

Katie Coker covers the "Kingsholm Beat" for The Citizen

At Last...!

Bedford 25 Gloucester 33



After a long 15 years, Gloucester has some major silverware. The Cherry and Whites won a pulsating Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup Final at Franklin's Gardens on April 3, beating Bedford 33-25.

There were some marvellous moments to cherish: Philippe Saint-André made two storming runs, Mark Mapletoft's chip and run to score and not least, the final celebrations. In front of some 3,000 happy fans who had made the trip from Gloucester, skipper Pete Glanville raised the trophy and said: "It's defences that win matches - and our defence tonight was outstanding".

Mapletoft accounted for 18 of Gloucester's points and was named Cheltenham & Gloucester "man of the match". He scored two drop goals, two conversions, one penalty - and scored a scintillating try.

Terry Fanolua and Richard Ward both scored tries and the scoring was completed with a penalty try. Prop Pete Jones came off the bench with some ten minutes to go to make his 200th appearance for the club.

From the start Bedford attacked with such ferocity that it was surely inevitable that they would score. But it was Gloucester who opened the scoring. Dave Sims made a great surging run into the Bedford 22, the ball was recycled quickly and although it appeared Mapletoft had misjudged his chip over the defence, Fanolua picked up the loose ball and raced away from the cover to score in Gloucester's first foray into Bedford territory.

Undeterred Bedford mounted another siege but Gloucester's defence held firm. Saint-André had a storming run round the Bedford defence to start only the second attack in the Bedford half. Gloucester again made the most of their chances as Ward powered

through a maul to score in the 23rd minute. Mapletoft converted.

Once more Bedford came back to try their luck and this time they were rewarded with an unconverted Crabb try. Just two minutes later Bedford were knocking at the door again and Whetstone dropped a fine goal from well outside the 22 to close the gap to 8-12. But the remainder of the half was all Gloucester as Mapletoft first converted a penalty and then dropped a goal to take Gloucester closer to the cup at half-time.

Half-time: Bedford 8, Gloucester 18

Coach Richard Hill brought the team back out early to run through training drills before the start of the second half. It appeared to work because the Gloucester team that played the first half also turned up for the second, unlike so many previous away matches.

Rayer brought Bedford back into the game with a penalty but Gloucester camped themselves five metres from the Bedford line. The Bedford scrum repeatedly collapsed and Campsall eventually gave the try though ironic jeers accompanied the cheers. Mapletoft converted to take Gloucester well clear at 11-25.

Bedford replied immediately when the referee awarded a penalty try, apparently for persistent offside. Gloucester lost a bit of discipline at this point and Sims had a quiet conversation with the referee before Rayer made the conversion.

From the restart Gloucester won the ball and Mapletoft produced a piece of magic. Seeing the Bedford defence had rushed forward to a man, the Gloucester fly-half chipped over the line, tapped the ball on and pounced to score a try that was acknowledged more loudly than any

other score. Although Mapletoft missed the conversion as the ball came back off the posts, with only 12 minutes remaining even the most sceptical Gloucester fan was beginning to believe that the Cherry and Whites would be taking the cup home.

The outcome was confirmed in the 77th minute when Mapletoft dropped another goal and with a 15 point lead it was clear that Gloucester would win. Paramore scored a consolation try that gave the scoreline some respectability but it was to be Gloucester's night and Gloucester's name on the cup. As the final whistle went, the crowd invaded the pitch. The team took a lap of honour, each one receiving the cheers, praise and celebrations with broad, grinning smiles, especially Fanolua - he was given the sort of welcome reserved for heroes.

Glanville climbed the steps to receive the cup, closely followed by all the team. Once assembled, the team applauded the support and joined in as the crowd cried out, "Glawster! Glawster!" - none more so than Richard Tombs. It was a welcomed scene and one that will be repeated time and again as Richard Hill's team matures into the team we know they can be - the team that will win the Premiership.

Man of the Match: The match adjudicator gave the official award to Mapletoft and it is true he produced the sort of performance that Gloucester have needed for too long. But we think recognition should be given to a player who has had hardly any opportunity to show his undoubted talent - Trevor Woodman. He gave his opponent a torrid time in the set scrum, and no less a hard time in the loose.



WELCOME TO



Gloucester Rugby Football Club

It's a pleasure to be able to welcome you all to Kingsholm today as newly crowned cup winners. Again Gloucester has done it before everyone else, proving this is the place for rugby's trend-setters. In the 1970's we were the first club side to win the RFU Knock Out Cup, which is now known as the Tetley's Bitter Cup. Before the advent of the leagues, the Cherry and Whites were victorious in the John Smith's Merit table, the inaugural Worthington 'tens' and now we've won the inaugural Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup.

Antone who was in Northampton on Friday

evening for the final against Bedford will have witnessed a super cup final. It was a terrific game, we had nearly four thousand cheering us on, and the players put on an excellent performance. The experience gained for some of the younger members of our squad will be invaluable. We're already keen to keep hold of the trophy next season.

To follow that victory there could hardly be a better occasion than to entertain the leaders of the Allied Dunbar Premiership here at Kingsholm. Newcastle have had a great season and I am anticipating a great atmosphere here today. I managed to spend some time with Newcastle's Director of Coaching Rob Andrew. He was keen to stress how much he was looking forward to his visit to Gloucester. I assured him he and his players would receive the warmest of welcomes. I'm

sure those of you in the Shed will make sure of that.

As far as the destiny of the first Premiership title is concerned, it's great to be playing a part in the title run in, although we'll have to wait at least another year to collect the title ourselves. It must be healthy for our sport to see new sides, from new areas contesting for the top honours, instead of the endless run ins between the likes of Bath and Leicester. Personally I'd prefer to see more home based players representing some of the top sides. I believe we have got the balance about right, with the bulk of our players being English, complimented by a few talented imports. Other teams seem to have the balance the other way around and the English players are often squeezed out. But saying that I have the highest of regards for Newcastle, Saracens and Bath, but I'm going to go against the pundits and tip Bath to come up on the rails to win again.

John Fidler



TODAY'S OPPONENTS – NEWCASTLE



Long Time No See



You could say, of course, that we've never seen today's formidable visitors

before, but it's really a case of how one defines ones terms. Today there are Newcastle Falcons. Before that, they were simply 'Newcastle'. Earlier still there was Newcastle Gosforth who succeeded...

Gosforth ! Now there's a name which sets the emotional pulses racing for old Kingsholm hands. Do you recall the long trek over the field to reach the old Gosforth pitch ? The disallowed Peter Butler penalty which put us out of the old John Player Cup ?

Does the rematch here at Kingsholm the following season still set the spine tingling ? If you're too young to remember all that, then you've missed one of the great passages in the history of Gloucester RFC. Even so, you will have heard about the never-to-be-forgiven faux pas by Nigel Starmer Smith who described that victory as "a real shock". I'm told that fellow old boys of Barnwood C of E School immediately disowned him for that blunder. And Kingsholm was never the same for poor old Starmer after that.

All that aside, we would be the first to admit that that old Gosforth side was a great one, boasting such performers as Messrs Uttley, Dixon and Madsen in the

pack, and a host of die-hard old performers outside it. We always seemed to get drawn against them, and mighty were the consequences thereof.

There was even a touch of farce. There is a story that on the day of one of the away matches a phone call was received at Kingsholm from a carload of supporters who couldn't find the ground. It transpired that they'd turned the wrong way on leaving Gloucester and found themselves in Gosport rather than Gosforth. And you can't get much further away while still remaining in England.

Time has certainly moved on since then. Newcastle were the first club to latch on to the potential of the new professional era, and stole a twelve-month march on the rest of us thereby. Their very first signing still remains one of the shrewdest. By securing the services of Rob Andrew, they set the scene for many a negotiation thereafter, and laid the foundation for a side whose rise up through the ranks has been, to coin a cliché, meteoric. Nowadays, in spite of the odd recent hiccup, they have a valid claim to be regarded as the best side in England. Bath supporters might quibble - but look at the table.

And I still think that Rob Andrew hung up his International boots just a season or two early.

There isn't a weak point in this

Newcastle Falcons side. There's simply no escape from top-class performers in any position you care to name. If that were all there were to the game, then we might as well not bother turning up, but of course, life isn't like that. And it certainly isn't at Kingsholm. Ask Leicester, Wasps, Saracens and Northampton.

It would be invidious to select any particular player for special mention, but there's one performer who must get a reference from me. That splendid prop forward Nick Popplewell has decided to retire from International rugby. He's a valued opponent of ours, having tried conclusions with many a sturdy Gloucester prop over the seasons. We wish him well, and hope we still see him on the club scene for quite a time yet.

So it's a hearty welcome to Newcastle Falcons. But don't think this game is going to be a doddle. It isn't.

BY THE WAY...

I wonder if our visitors know that they're not the only 'Newcastle Falcons' on the sporting scene. My researches on the Internet reveal that there is another outfit of the same name who play in Australia's National basketball League.

How's your slam dunk, Doddie ?

by Peter Arnold



The Player Interview



Philippe Saint-André



This interview with Philippe Saint-André was conducted following the match against Saracens and is reproduced here courtesy the Kingsholm Chronicle, the internet site that is 100 per cent Gloucester RFC. Mike Weaver of the Chronicle conducted the interview in French and what appears below is the translation. Linguists who want the original version can do so by logging-on to <http://www.glawster.demon.co.uk> and looking for the bit that's not in English!

Kingsholm Chronicle: Could you identify the decisive factors which led us to victory in the match today?

Philippe Saint-André: I think that the decisive factors could have been that the team knew how to vary its play between the forward-play, three-quarter play and the play around the fringes and I think that we were threatening everywhere, varying our play well and defending well in the second half. I think that it was a high quality game.

KC: Do you think that Saracens are able to win the championship?

PS-A: I think that along with Newcastle, they are the two candidates for the title. This weekend they received a warning, a defeat, but they're lots of points ahead of the other teams.

KC: Were you happy with your own performance today?

PS-A: Happy...? I'm not sure if its my place to judge! To begin with I'm happy that Gloucester won today and I'm also happy because after my 3-month lay-off I was really wondering whether I would be able to play again at the same level. I think that it's getting better every day and that today was a lot better than last Wednesday [against Wasps]. I can see that the bruising on my thigh has cleared up, but I'm still lacking a bit of pace. Its coming back after 3 months of injury, so I'm really happy to be able to get the feeling back in my leg and today I really rediscovered how it feels to play rugby.

KC: And in general are you pleased with your performances since you've been at Gloucester?

PS-A: No, because for the last 10 years I've been used to playing 45 games per year for my club and this year I've missed lots of games, so I really want to play very, very well in the games which remain for Gloucester in this tail-end of the season.

KC: The remainder of the season is going to be very important for you ...

PS-A: Yes, its important because I think that today I got through a key stage in my recovery. I will have to improve in each game to be able to regain my fitness in 15 days to 3 weeks after suffering a 9 centimetre tear to my thigh which took 3 months to heal. I've been working very hard and I'd like to thank all the players and all the coaching staff at Gloucester who have stood by me during this very difficult period.

KC: You were at Kingsholm last season when we beat Leicester. What were your thoughts about the team that night?

PS-A: I thought there was a superb atmosphere, I thought the Shed was something else! I thought the players were committed, very very young but they gave everything they had. I think that with the arrival of some players with a bit of experience like César [Terry Fanolua],

Tombs and myself who have been able to bring some experience into the back-line, these players are becoming even better game by game. They were very good last year and now they're even better.

KC: What do you think of the phenomenon of 'The Shed'?

PS-A: I think that it has to be kept and to be expanded because before coming here I spoke with Laurent Cabannes, Thierry Lacroix and Philippe Sella. They said that when you go to Gloucester its always difficult and that to play in front of the Shed isn't exactly a pleasant experience! So I think its something different - it has to be kept, maintained and expanded. It's a bit like the crowd at Clarent-Ferrand where I used to play where there were 4,000 - 5,000 home supporters.

KC: How could the present team be described?

PS-A: The team doesn't have a lot of star-players like the other English teams ...especially those teams which have 10 or 15 internationals, and I think that there is an attitude at Gloucester which is shared by a close-knit group which gives all it can for the team. Not only are talented young players coming to light like Phil Vickery, who now plays for England ,but there are also many players who are recovering from injury. I think that the players who have come in are trying to settle themselves in and to give all they can on the pitch. This has produced a team which at the start of the season was written off by the bookmakers as a relegation prospect and now we're closer to the Top Four than tenth or eleventh place.

KC: It's often said here that the Gloucester players are often underestimated by the press and so they don't get picked for the national team...

PS-A: I think that its only through your team that you can make a name for yourself and become well-known and famous. I needed to play well at Montferrand for 5 years before I received any recognition! The players here are very



Philippe S

Player Interview



young but they are starting to make a name for themselves. There are quite a few players who are going to become prominent and have a good reputation to build upon in future years because its noticeable that Gloucester is starting to see itself as a team which is difficult to beat. I think that the best thing for the youngsters who are getting stronger is not to forget that in rugby you owe everything to the team, that you owe everything to the other 14 players. And if they forget that one day it will mean the worst of declines, especially for Gloucester.

KC: *What do you think now needs to be done to improve the team?*

PS-A: I think that more work needs to be put in, but I think that today, as we showed against Bristol, you need to be able to mix-up your game between the forwards and the backs and to be able to pose a threat all over the pitch. At the same time we've got to maintain our attitude and the fundamental Gloucester mentality.

KC: *Why is it that the team finds it difficult to win away? Is it a matter of attitude?*

PS-A: The players have to feel as at ease away as they do when they are in front of the Shed because there isn't a Shed at Saracens or London Irish or anywhere else. I think that today the players took some confidence from the fact that they can beat the best teams in England as well as the best French sides - because we beat some good teams in the European Conference. They realise now that we don't have to be content with away performances where we merely defend well, but where we take the game to the other side, like we did against Wasps for 50 minutes at Wasps.

KC: *Was it necessary for you to adapt yourself to the 'English Game'?*

PS-A: No, because I'm not a typical winger. I played in Jacques Ferroux' system and I played under 5 different coaches in the French team. I'm a winger who can not only finish, but also a winger who comes inside to look for the ball, who runs off the

scrum-half and who gets involved with rucks. So I can get used to lots of playing systems because I'm a versatile winger, not just a sprinter.

KC: *I read somewhere that at the beginning of your time here you found training tough because of the emphasis put on weight training ...*

PS-A: Yes, it was very hard because in France I'd never done weight training in my life! And from July until August I thought it was mad doing 3 or 4 weight-training sessions per week! It's a real challenge and I hope I'll make it! I hope that I can carry on without getting injured and to be able to bring the best I can to the Gloucester team.

KC: *Do you think that the championship in England is better than that in France?*

PS-A: It's not the same but the system here is better than in France You could say that you play less in England but in France the game is a lot more violent than in England and I must say that I prefer to play in a championship

where you can actually play more as its more civilised ... but that's not to say that the French are savages!

KC: *You must have been very frustrated during these past few weeks...*

PS-A: Well yes, because I've missed out on about 10 games for Gloucester. Also, I was originally selected to play against England but I told the coach that it wasn't worth picking me because I had a bad leg and well, that's life. Today I was glad to have finished a game and to have experienced again the feeling of have taken part in a great victory for Gloucester!

KC: *What did you do during those 6 weeks?*

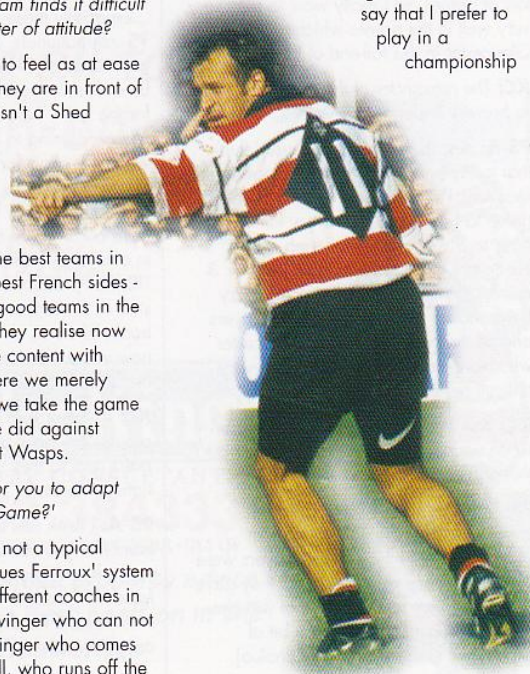
PS-A: It was more than 6 weeks... I re-injured the same thigh each time that I tried to make a come-back. I took care of myself for 3 months and now I'm trying to come back. It has been very difficult - especially mentally - in a country where I haven't too firm a grasp on the language at a club where I'd just arrived, whereas in France I had shown that I could play 40 games per year. It's true that it was difficult, but I've just completed 2 games in a row with 2 wins for Gloucester.

KC: *Have you helped out with the training of the other players?*

PS-A: Richard Tombs and I try and give the players the benefit of our experience. We try and talk to them about the finer points of defensive and attacking play. They are only really little things but they make all the difference. Today, for example you could see the difference in the backs. We pointed out to them that they were coming into the game from too great a distance and then that they should come into the line on the shoulder of their teammate and the consequence was that today they scored tries!

KC: *How does it make you feel, having to watch the Five Nations' Tournament on the TV instead of being there?*

PS-A: Well, its certainly better playing than watching it on TV! But I've already been lucky enough to play 69 times for the



aint-André



French team, to score 32 tries and to have captained the side 34 times. I'm far from being bitter about it because I'm a privileged person. So I watch it, I'm a supporter and I try to get the most out of myself so that I can give my best for Gloucester.

KC: Does it bother you that you only need one more cap to become the most capped French captain of all time?

PS-A: No, if it happens then it happens ... if it doesn't then that's fate. I look at it philosophically. And even if there are difficult times you shouldn't get upset!

KC: Could you describe for me the emotions that you feel when you lead out the national side?

PS-A: It's just magnificent - it's a huge privilege. It's a great honour especially when you consider that a wing three-quarter is never usually captain. I had 34 wins. If you're not born a captain you can't become one. I captain a side mainly by talking with the players and by motivating them and it certainly has a huge effect on me here where I don't say a word. I listen to the others and try and understand them whereas in France...

KC: I've noticed that when you play here you seem very isolated. Fans in the Shed cry out 'Philippe, Philippe!!' but you don't look over towards the Shed!

PS-A: Well no, I think the problem is that when I walk back every time I have to concentrate, but I can assure you that I hear it and I like it!

KC: And your nick-name 'le goret' - who invented that?

PS-A: 'Little Pig?' It's a long story I was given that nick-name when I played tennis when I was younger. And the first time I played rugby in the first division all my tennis mates came along with these big cards with 'Come On Little Pig!' written on them. And so ever since then you could say that on the pitch I look more like a little pig although I can run like a gazelle!

KC: And do the Gloucester players still call you 'Little Pig'?

PS-A: I don't know!

KC: What have been the highlights of your career?

PS-A: To have won 3 tests in a row against the All Blacks and to have been the captain when we won two test series in New Zealand. A bad memory is losing in the World Cup final, but then we did win against England to get third place!

KC: Are you fairly anonymous here? Do you get recognised in the street from time to time?

PS-A: Yes, but that's OK ... I'm a lot more anonymous than in France! In France it's said that I've never had the chance to mess about with my wife but I can do it here without any problems so it's all right!

KC: What do you think about professionalism?

PS-A: It's great when you can play but it's more difficult when you're injured!

KC: But on a personal level ... have you benefited from it?

PS-A: I benefited from it at the beginning when I quickly regained my fitness. But the big problem is when you get injured, and if you work you think about other things and it's difficult to get on with your life.

KC: What's the situation in France concerning the relationship between the clubs and the 'establishment'?

PS-A: They've got the same problems as the English.

KC: And what do you think about it?

PS-A: The argument has gone on for a long time ... I think that everyone will have sorted themselves out by the end of the World Cup.

KC: Why aren't there more English players playing in France?

PS-A: Well, the clubs are really starting to organise themselves now. It's possible that in 2 years time there will be some English players in France.

KC: OK, you live in Cheltenham - what do you think about it?

PS-A: It's a very beautiful town! Montferrand, where I lived before, is a bit of a mixture between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

KC: And have you often spent time in Gloucester?

PS-A: Yes!

KC: And what do you think about it?

PS-A: It's a great place to play rugby and to have a bit of a drink after the game!

KC: And she's happy about that?

PS-A: Yes, she's very happy!





Many thanks to
today's Match Day
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Sunday 11th April 1998 Kick-off 2.15pm

GLOUCESTER ²⁷
Cherry & White

NEWCASTLE ²⁹
Black & White

15	CHRIS CATLING	Full Back	STUART LEGG	15
14	BRIAN JOHNSON	Right Wing	JIM NAYLOR	14
13	TERRY FANOLUA (I)	Centre	VA'AIGA TUIGAMALA (I)	13
12	RICHARD TOMBS (I)	Centre	ALAN TAIT (I)	12
11	PHILIPPE SAINT-ANDRE (I)	Left Wing	TONY UNDERWOOD (I)	11
10	MARK MAPLETOFT (I) ^{IC} _{SP}	Outside Half	ROB ANDREW (I) ^{2T} ^{3C} _{IP}	10
9	SCOTT BENTON	Scrum Half	GARY ARMSTRONG (I)	9
1	TONY WINDO	Prop	NICK POPPLEWELL (I)	1
2	NEAL MCCARTHY	Hooker	ROSS NESDALE (I)	2
3	PHIL VICKERY (I)	Prop	PAUL VAN-ZANDVLIET	3
4	ROB FIDLER	Lock	GARATH ARCHER (I)	4
5	DAVE SIMS	Lock	DODDIE WEIR	5
6	PETE GLANVILLE*	Flanker	PAT LAM (I)	6
7	NATHAN CARTER	Flanker	RICHARD ARNOLD	7
8	STEVE OJOMOH (I) ^T	No. 8	DEAN RYAN* (I)	8
16	AUDLEY LUMSDEN	Replacements	RICHARD HORTON	16
17	M KIMBER		DAVID BARNES	17
18	LAURIE BECK		PETER WALTON (I) ^T	18
19	ANDY DEACON		CHRIS SIMPSON-DANIEL	19
20	SIMON DEVEREUX		JONNY WILKINSON (I)	20
21	PHIL GREENING		MARTIN SHAW	21
22				22

Referee

**J PEARSON RFU
DURHAM**



supported
by



Touch Judges

**D MATTHEWS RFU
L BRYANT RFU**



CLUB

NEWS

TEN TON TOFTY !



I'm obviously not being rude about Mark Mapletoff's figure here, but presenting humble felicitations on his extraordinary achievements of the points scoring persuasion. As everyone must know by now, Mark has

broken the national record for reaching the magic 1,000 points mark in fewer games for a single club than anyone else has ever done. In fact, he shattered John Liley's Leicester record by a considerable margin.

Of course, although Gloucester is famed throughout the rugby-playing world as a nursery for hard and proficient forwards, I think you will find that there haven't been many periods of the club's history when the blood, sweat and tears of the front eight have not been completed by the silkier expertise of a top-quality goal kicker.

Think about it. In living memory we can be grateful for the efforts of such surgical kickers as Harold Boughton, Graham Parker, Bill Hook, Don Rutherford and Peter Butler. And that's just the internationals. We could also mention the likes of Willie Jones, Paul Ford, Eric Stephens and the fondly recalled Tim Smith.

I noticed that, in the reports of Mark Mapletoff's record, one or two writers referred to him as a 'goalkicking machine', but in my view, that's hardly fair. I doubt if any of the illustrious predecessors scored as many tries for Gloucester as Tofy has in the past couple of seasons. Tim Smith, Peter Butler and Willie Jones all had their moments, but I don't think any of them matched young Mark in that regard. No doubt I shall hear from someone or other with figures to refute that assertion, but I remain to be convinced.

Tofy is still a comparative beginner, too. It sometimes comes as quite a surprise to remember that he is only in his second season as a specialist outside-half. Furthermore, his career has been interrupted by some nasty and long-standing injuries. As far as Mark Mapletoff is concerned, it may well be that the best is yet to come. Quite apart from anything else, he's a highly attractive player to watch, not least for his ability to come up with the unexpected. He also has that touch of arrogance about his play which is so often a feature of the world-class performer.

It's a marvellous achievement however you look at it. Keep piling 'em in, Tofy.

NO TERRY TO START

I hear that we shall be deprived of the considerable services of centre Terry Fanolua in August and September of next season. The reason is a happy one. He will be required by his Western Samoa national side.

Obviously, we shall miss him, but Gloucester has never stood between a man and his International career yet, and we're not about to start now. It would be nice to think that Terry will benefit from his experience here at Kingsholm, which must be quite different from anything he underwent previously.

Best of luck, Terry. But do us a favour. Don't get injured, will you ?

GANGWAY !

Today, and next Saturday, being 'big' days, I should again make the request that you watch where you're standing. Please don't occupy gangways or steps. This is a Police and Fire Service regulation, made for very good and understandable reasons.

You wouldn't want to get in the way in any emergency situation which might, sadly, arise, would you ?

THE BIG ONE NEXT WEEK

No doubt the massed ranks of Newcastle Falcons will be a bit surprised at that heading. They are after all, the League leaders, and bidding fair to remain so. However, I suspect that most Gloucester supporters will regard next Saturday's game as the one they reely, reely wanna win. It's Bath.

Sorry chaps, but the annual visit from the boys from the Rec. is, without doubt, the high spot of the Kingsholm season, producing an atmosphere like no other game. And they could still nip in and take the Premiership, you know. Richard Hill thinks so, anyway.

In consequence, it has been decided to make next Saturday's game (back to 3.00pm kick-off), an all ticket affair, although season tickets will, of course, be honoured. There's no doubt that we shall have a full house, so you'd do everyone a favour, including yourself, if you came along a bit early.

Should be a humdinger.

TAILPIECE

As you may know, I've always been slightly dubious about applying the nickname 'cherry-and-whites' to Gloucester. What was wrong with the old and traditional 'Elver Eaters' ? Well, now I know.

Talking to a devout and practising elver fisherman, last week, I found that the little delicacies were selling at £220 per kilo. Later, I hear, the figure went up to £300.

Even the earlier figure yielded a sum of an obscene 21p. per elver !

So we had to change our name. We couldn't afford the old one.

FORCES RUGBY

Kingsholm will be "home" for the Royal Air Force during this season's Inter-Services Championships. After an away date against



CLUB

NEWS



the Royal Navy, the RAF come to Kingsholm on Wednesday May 13 for their clash against the Army.

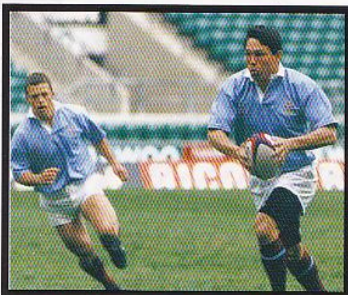
The match should provide a milestone for Rory Underwood, whose 89 caps and 49 tries had set the standards for English. All being well, Rory will create a record 29 caps for the Royal Air Force when he steps out on the Kingsholm turf.

In the match against the Royal Navy, Underwood will tie the record of 28 caps with Sgt. Steve Worrell. And if you think that 28 - or 29 - caps is not that many, then bear in mind that it is only possible to gain two each season! The RAF record for appearances is also a tri-Service record.

The Army is expected to turn-out it's stars for the Kingsholm fixture - they include Tim Rodber and Brian Johnson.

Just cannot get away from the Gloucester, Bedford, Northampton "axis", can we?

Tickets for the RAF v Army match are expected to go on sale at the Kingsholm ticket office at the end of the month.



Rory Underwood with Brett Wakfar, our scrum half, in support. Brett plays for Newbury

THE FALCONS HAVE LANDED AT KINGSHOLM!

Please welcome to Kingsholm today The National Birds of Prey Centre who are giving a special Easter time demonstration of falconry before the Gloucester Cherry and Whites take on the rugby Falcons from Newcastle.

You may not know it but only 11 miles from this ground we have at The National Birds of Prey Centre one of the most significant collections of birds of prey and owls in the world. The Centre holds over 80 species with about 280 birds in all. Their reputation is high throughout the world for their work in the conservation of birds of prey and their habitats.

Jemima Parry-Jones and her staff will be demonstrating the flight characteristics of a number of different birds from the Centre. Each bird has a unique approach, some birds fly fast and straight - they are the sprinters and run out of steam quickly. Other are more controlled, pacing themselves, climbing high and stooping dramatically, making use of air currents to assist with their flying techniques.

At the National Birds of Prey Centre in Newent, visitors can see the trained birds in an area called the Hawk Walk, this is an ideal place to see them up close and take photographs. The breeding birds live in the barn like aviaries and now in the time to go and see many species breeding. It looks like being a good breeding year for the Centre. Already two eagles are half grown, five

baby owls are no longer babies and many eggs are being incubated as we speak. The Centre leads the world in the captive breeding field, having bred 50 species in its 30 years of life.

For more information on the incredible work done, or to visit the Centre for yourselves contact:

The National Birds of Prey Centre,
Newent,
Gloucestershire.
GL18 1JJ
Telephone:
01531 280286
Email ipj@nbpc.demon.co.uk



Today's mascot - Christopher Atkins



Today's mascot is Christopher Atkins aged eight (nine at the end of this month). He lives at Upton Bishop, near Ross-on-Wye and has a sister called Laura aged six.

Christopher attends Wycliffe College Junior School Stonehouse. His hobbies and interests include rugby (he plays for school and Monmouth Minis), cricket, tennis and motor racing. Christopher also enjoys supporting Gloucester RFC, which he has been doing since he was six, and always tries to get his programme signed to add to his collection.

Christopher's favourite players are Chris Catling and Philippe Saint-André. He is working hard learning French at school so that he can talk to Philippe and Raphael.

Another hobby that Christopher has is annoying his sister!



SUPPORTERS SPOT

Gloucester Rugby

25th March 1998

THOSE GLOUCESTER PROPS

Phil Vickery, Gloucester's latest recruit to the England ranks, is following in a distinguished band of Gloucester forwards who have been selected for their Country.

The first prop for England, Thomas William Price, who won 6 caps 1948-49, and eventually had a street in Cheltenham named after him.

Next in line is George William Hastings who gained 13 caps 1955-58, a loose head with an acute positional sense, and a member of Eric Evans Grand Slam Team (1957).

The last to win the honour for England until 1980.

The third in line is Kenneth James Wilson who won 1 cap against France 1963.

Then Michael Alan Burton, a tighthead who loved taking on the opposition, who gained 17 caps 1972-78.

The next is Philip John Blakeway who won 19 caps 1980-85 a cornerstone of England's 1980 Grand Slam Team.

Then Gordon Sargent (1 cap) made his international debut when he replaced Phil Blakeway, in 1981 against Ireland. Malcolm Preedy (1 cap) against South Africa in Port Elizabeth 1984, when Gloucester made rugby history, when the club provided the entire England front row... Malcolm Preedy, Steve Mills, Phil Blakeway.

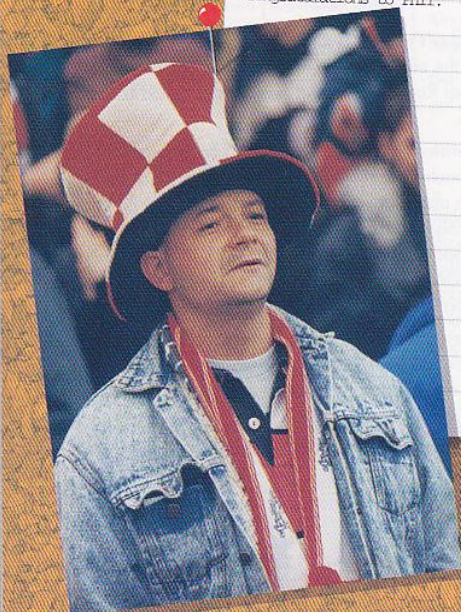
Last but not least a lone Scotsman Pete Jones (1 cap), earned his full Scotland cap as a replacement for Paul Burnell at the Arms Park 1992.

And finally to Phillip John Vickery who made his England debut on 21 February 1998.

Congratulations to Phil.

Alan Kear,
Hucclecote, Gloucester

Gloucester Rugby Football Club welcome all Supporters contributions to the programme. We offer a pair of ground tickets to an Allied Dunbar Premiership match for all items printed.
Many thanks to Alan Kear, Gloucester.



Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup Final
Bedford 33 Gloucester 25



Gloucester v Newcastle, 11th April 1998

25



supported by

