

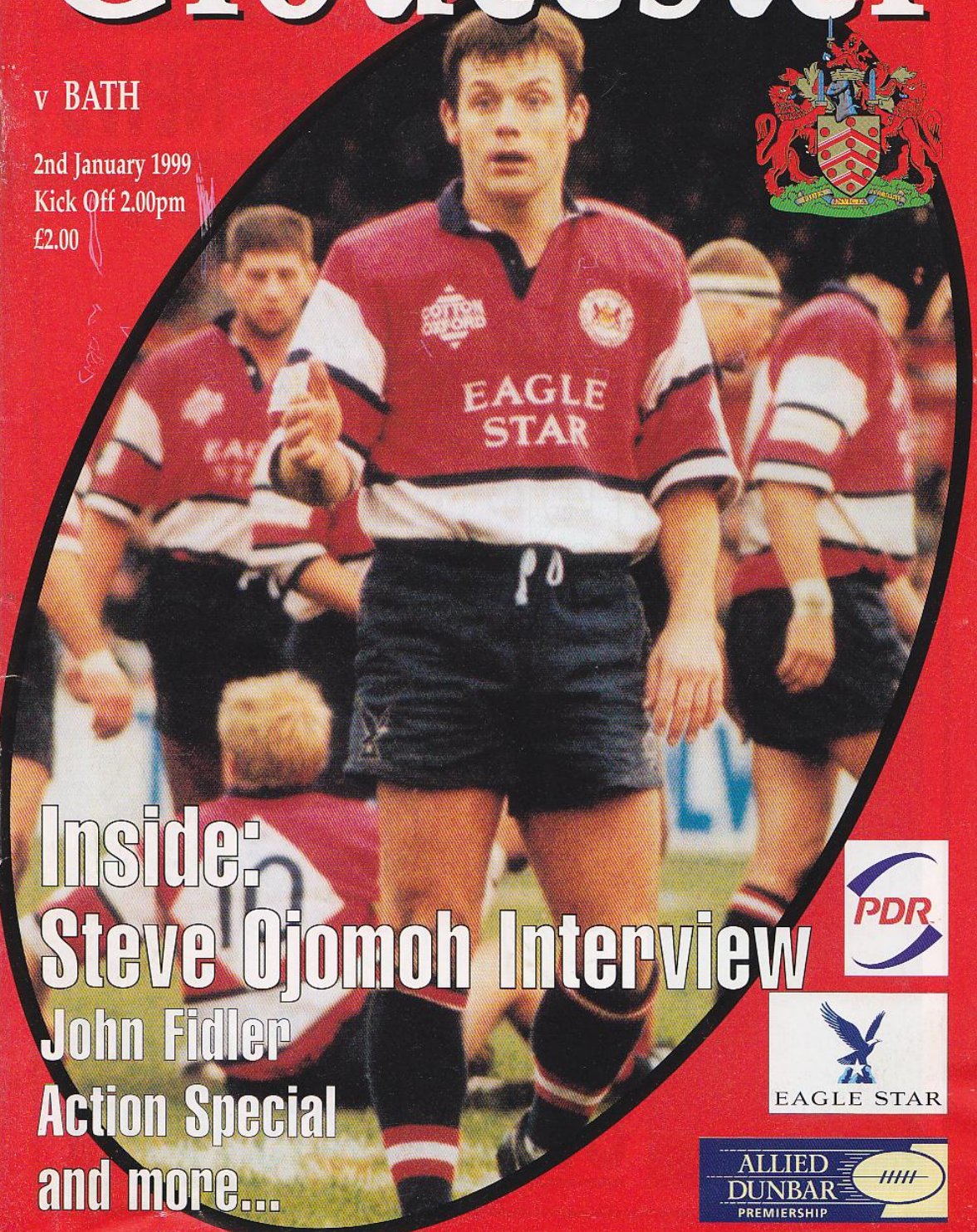
Gloucester

v BATH

2nd January 1999

Kick Off 2.00pm

£2.00



Inside:
Steve Ojomoh Interview
John Fidler
Action Special
and more...





GLOUCESTER



BATH



Today's Match Day Sponsor:
Lloyds Bank Commercial Service
Match Ball Sponsor: Thornton's plc

15 Chris Catling
14 Brian Johnson
13 Terry Fanolua
12 Richard Tombs
11 Rory Greenslade-Jones

10 Mark Mapletoft
9 Scott Benton

1 Trevor Woodman
2 Neil McCarthy
3 Andy Deacon
4 Rob Fidler (c)
5 Mark Cornwell
6 Ed Pearce
7 Nathan Carter
8 Steve Ojomoh

16 Ian Sanders
17 Simon Mannix
18 Audley Lumsden
19 Adey Powles
20 Dave Sims
21 Chris Fortey
22 Andrew Hazell

Full Back
 Right Wing
 Centre
 Centre
 Left Wing

Outside Half
 Scrum Half

Prop
 Hooker
 Prop
 Lock
 Lock
 Flanker
 Flanker
 No. 8

Replacements

15 Jon Callard
14 Ian Balshaw
13 Kevin Maggs
12 Jeremy Guscott
11 Adedayo Adebayo

10 Mike Catt
9 Steve Hatley

1 Dave Hilton
2 Mark Regan
3 Victor Ubogu
4 Steve Borthwick
5 Nigel Redman
6 Richard Webster (c)
7 Eric Peters
8 Dan Lyle

16 Gareth Cooper
17 Andy Long
18 Kevin Yates
19 Matt Perry
20 Mike Tindall
21 Russell Earnshaw
22 Ben Sturnham

Referee
 Brian Campsall

Touch Judges
 Stuart Piercy
 Jeff Williams

From the Team Manager

I hope you had a very enjoyable Christmas. Today we welcome our friends from Bath for what is usually the most contested rugby match on the rugby calendar.

Looking at the results of both sides for the first part of the season it is obvious that we are both

desperate for a win and the vital two points.

I am sure that the Bath supporters are very pleased to see Dan Lyle fit and playing again. I have to say that he is one of the finest athletes playing the game today. No doubt Ojo will not agree. The contest between the two players today should be well worth watching.

At the time of writing the squad are preparing for the Wasps game and all I can say with regards to this match is that we definitely owe Wasps one - remember this is when 30 seconds became 3 minutes! And I always thought that when the ball was kicked

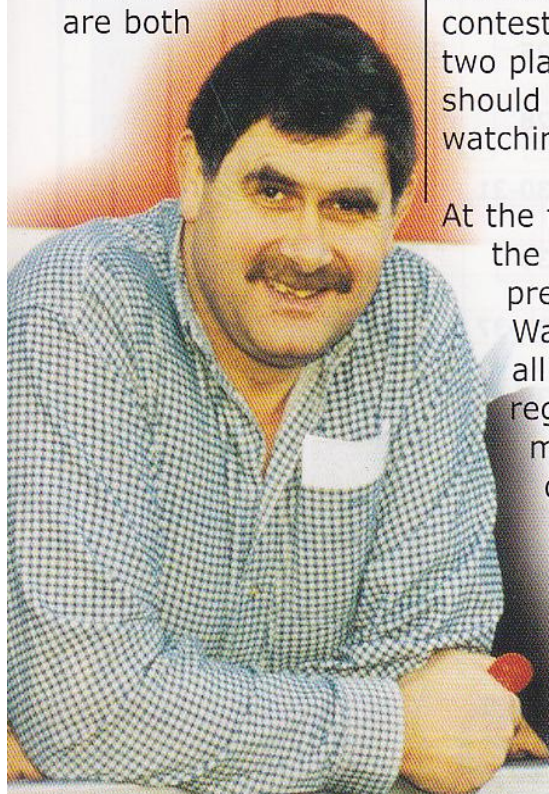
into touch the game was over.

I am sure today's game will be a great occasion played in the spirit we are accustomed to when Gloucester and Bath are on the field.

From all the players, coaches and management I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

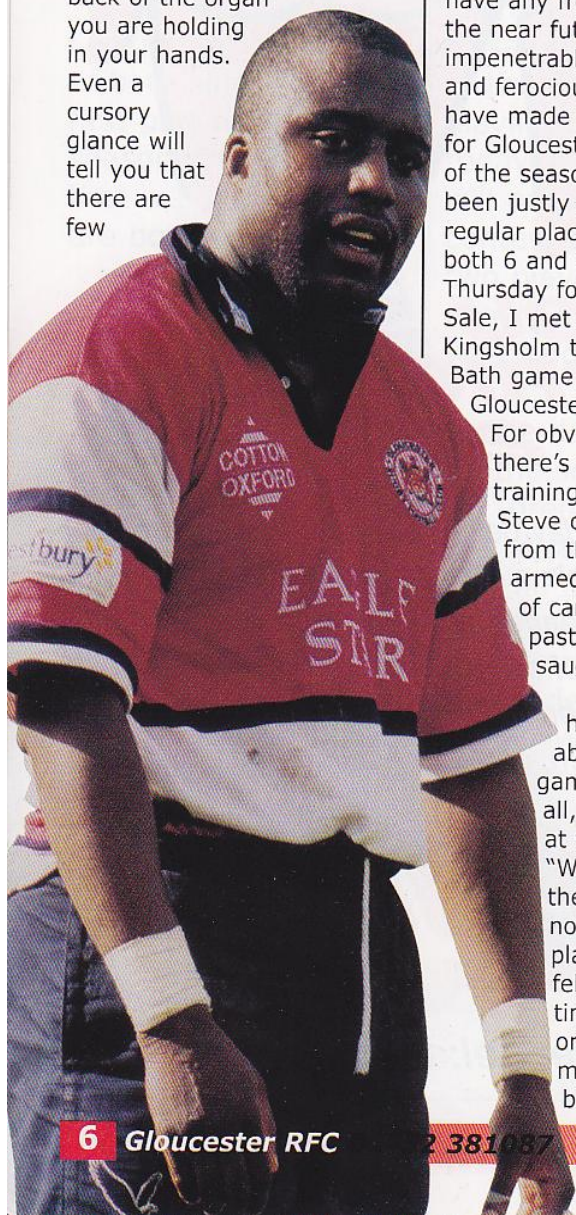
John Fidler

Team Manager



Steve Ojomoh Interview

As we all know, it's been a puzzling season for Gloucester. One week, a storming victory at Kingsholm against an impressive and in-form Saracens; the next, a humiliating defeat away to struggling Sale. Gloucester fans are rightly seeking some answers. It could be to do with squad strength and rotation: take a brief look at the season statistics in the back of the organ you are holding in your hands. Even a cursory glance will tell you that there are few



players who can feel confident that their name will be on the next team sheet, and even fewer that it will be on the team sheet after that. Richard Hill wrote in his mid-season report that he was aiming at a greater level of consistency in his selection policy.

Nonetheless, Steve Ojomoh is one Gloucester player who can feel reasonably sure he won't have any free Saturdays in the near future. His impenetrable defensive skills and ferocious ball-winning have made him a candidate for Gloucester's best forward of the season so far: and he's been justly rewarded with regular places in the team at both 6 and 8. So, the Thursday following the loss at Sale, I met Steve at Kingsholm to talk over the Bath game and his views on Gloucester's season so far.

For obvious reasons, there's no let up in the training schedule and Steve comes straight from the dressing room, armed only with a plate of carbohydrate-rich pasta, rice and tomato sauce.

Firstly, I ask him how he feels about the Bath game. He was, after all, a past favourite at the Rec...

"Well, I've played them three times now as a Gloucester player and it has felt strange each time. I've probably only been on top of my game once. It's been strange

because I've tried to overdo the preparation and focus too much. This time I'll try to take a back seat and treat it like any other game. In the past I've been too focused because of the rivalry between the clubs and also what it means to me: a lot of my old friends are still there." In fact, he's still close enough to those friends that when he

"You would have thought people would thrive on going to other grounds"

gets some precious time away from Gloucester's Christmas program, he'll spend it with them.

"I'm spending Christmas with the enemy," he laughs. "I'm staying in Bath because we're training on the 23rd and playing on the 24th so I'll probably be spending Christmas with Victor Ubogu and Adedayo Adebayo. I hope I don't get poisoned by the enemy at Christmas!"

No fear: though they remain friends, you can hardly doubt that, poison or no poison, they'll be clashing heads with real venom on the day:

Ojomoh is confident of both his form and fitness at the moment.

"Richard Hill was one of the reasons for coming here. Not only because I'd played and worked with him before, but because I knew he was the person to get the best out of

Steve Ojomoh Interview

me. Also, at various stages, I've played with Dave Sims and Phil Greening. I spoke to those guys and I knew it was the best place to come. I'm on top of my game at the moment. When I came to the club I was struggling for consistency: I'd have one big game and a couple of quiet ones, but I've played well all year."

While that's certainly true of Steve, it unfortunately isn't true of the Gloucester team as a whole. As a regular in the team, Ojomoh must be one of the best placed people to see what's been going wrong. Firstly, though, he disputes the often-touted view that it's only Gloucester who can't win away.

"The way the games are now, it's more about winning at home and sneaking some away points. I think that's the reason Gloucester and Bath are in similar positions with respect to the league. It's not just us: you look at sides like Newcastle and Bath.

Everybody can beat any team on their day on their home patch, although I don't understand why that happens in the professional game. You would have thought that people would thrive on going to other grounds. I thought the away thing would sort itself out after our win against Richmond, but we went back to square one after that result at Sale.

"Personally, I don't feel any different playing an away match than I do playing at home, but it's such a team sport that if two or three players are feeling different, then it makes a huge

difference to the team. You're playing twelve against fifteen! But, naturally, at home you do go that extra yard quicker

"Richard Hill's asked us whether we really want it and if the cherry and white means anything to us"

with the fans behind you: Gloucester is different from any other team I've played for in that respect."

Richard Hill was, shall we say, 'not best pleased' about the result at Sale. What has he done to try to get things right?

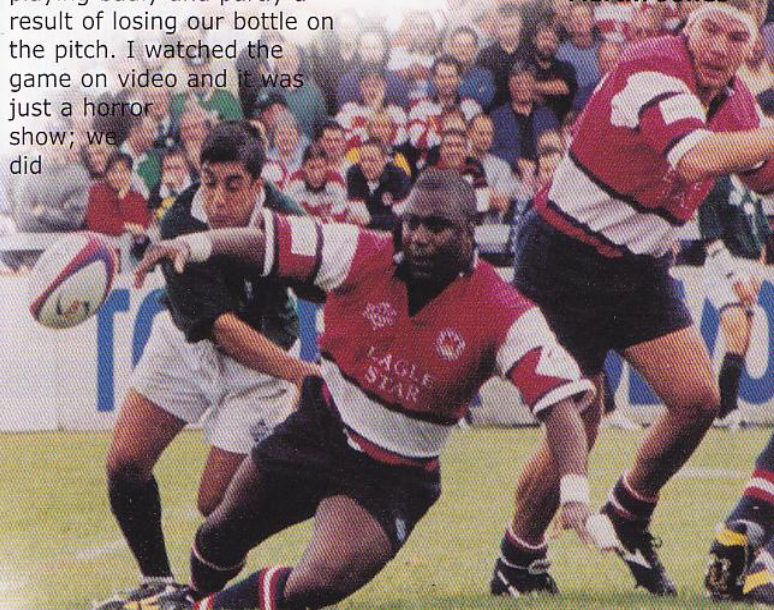
"Well, the thing is, the loss at Sale was partly a result of playing badly and partly a result of losing our bottle on the pitch. I watched the game on video and it was just a horror show; we did

everything wrong short of throwing in the towel. We disgraced the supporters and ourselves. I mean, we trained well during the week, we analysed the opposition and we knew their weaknesses, but it just went wrong on the pitch. It's all the mental stuff that hasn't been put in. Richard's asked us if we've really got what it takes." He's literally asked that question?

"Yes, he's asking the question are we man enough? Have we got enough bottle? He's asked us if we really want it and whether we just wear the shirt. Does the cherry and white mean anything to us? He asked us if we've got what it takes and he just left it to us."

So, with that, we'd better leave Steve to put in that preparation for the game against the enemy.

Martin Jones



Welcome to the Opponents



THE older you get, the more inclined the memory becomes to linger in the past. This is involuntary. How many of us remember the events of twenty years ago with absolute clarity whereas those of last week have fled? Or maybe it's because when we relive the events of yesteryear there is no one around to shout us down.

So it is with sport, that certain perceptions become fixed in the mind. I am not yet so long in the tooth, that I can remember seeing Peter Ford adorning Gloucester back rows, but Mike Burton and Robin Cowling doing unmentionable things to most opponents are there, along with Jim Jarrett, John Bayliss and Peter Butler, in the days when Gloucester ground down all and sundry and Butler kicked his goals.

Round about the same time Bath was, shall we say a variable force. They would swing from the very good to the absolutely horrid, there were days when Jim Waterman looked devastating at full back, and days when he seemed devastated. Nor was the Recreation Ground a fortress, not in comparison with Kingsholm, where men were men and opponents were despised, cannon fodder to be chewed up and spat out.

by David Hands of **THE TIMES**

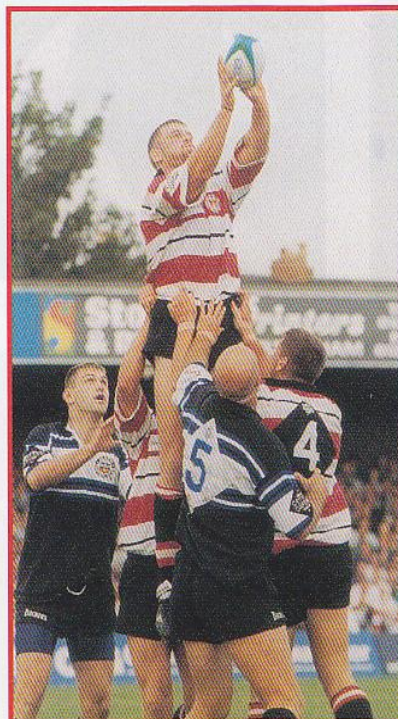
A few years later, the faces had changed but not the attitudes. Gloucester had reached a couple of cup finals, won one and drawn one, were still formidable up front and had one of the most under valued back rows it has been my good fortune to see playing club rugby: John Gadd, Mike Teague and Mike Longstaff. Bath? Well, they had yet to pull up any trees though anyone who could sniff the wind and who watched them on a regular basis might have known that change was coming.

So now change has come, and while Bath and Gloucester remain powers in the land, they are not what they have been. Bath's incomparable record of league and cup successes may never be equalled but the present generation has it hanging around their neck like an albatross: they must learn to shrug it off and produce some magic for their own time. But, curiously, during the time when they were cup kings, they imposed on Gloucester a lesson so devastating that I have no doubt it has served to create the vibrant side of today.

Not until they were crushed 48-6 by Bath in the 1990 cup final did Gloucester's old guard understand that what had served so well for many years would not sustain them any longer. It still took time before they could weave the ability of outsiders into the fabric of the club and, for those of a certain age, it remains the height of irony that one so singularly identified with

Bath's great years, Richard Hill, should be ruling the roost at Gloucester.

But they are better for it. Indeed Gloucester have done better than most in their housekeeping. Even some of us from outside the club and with no particular affiliation appreciate their ability to combine the best of the old world, or forwards drawn from their own borders, with talented players from the other side of the globe. It sometimes appears that Gloucester folk believe themselves to be under-valued by the national media. Do not believe it. There are few grounds we would rather go to, particularly when Bath comes visiting.



Shedheads v Tigers

They go from strength to strength! Fresh from pulling Saracens' supposed strongmen off their balance, the fine specimens of mankind pictured left left Leicester wondering what had hit them! The mighty Gloucester Tug of War team huffed and puffed and brought the house down. In fact, so petrified were Leicester that their famous Tiger didn't even dare to turn up! We'll hopefully see a great deal more pulling and tugging in the future. The pride of Gloucester is at stake!

Thanks are once again due to the British Tug of War Association who are kindly sponsoring the competition and supplying the rope and judges



Player of the Match

The Player of the Match award for the Leicester game was awarded to Mark Mapletoft. Tofty came on as a substitute, played on the wing for the first time this season, and ended up scoring a try, and kicking a penalty and conversion. Sadly, it wasn't enough to carry Gloucester to victory over the Tigers, but hopefully mark can lift his spirits with this bottle of champagne presented to him by Steve Hawker of the Kingsholm Chronicle website: www.kingsholm-chronicle.org.uk

If you would like to sponsor this award then please contact David Henwood at the club for further details.

12



WHAT A WAY TO START!

Peter Arnold

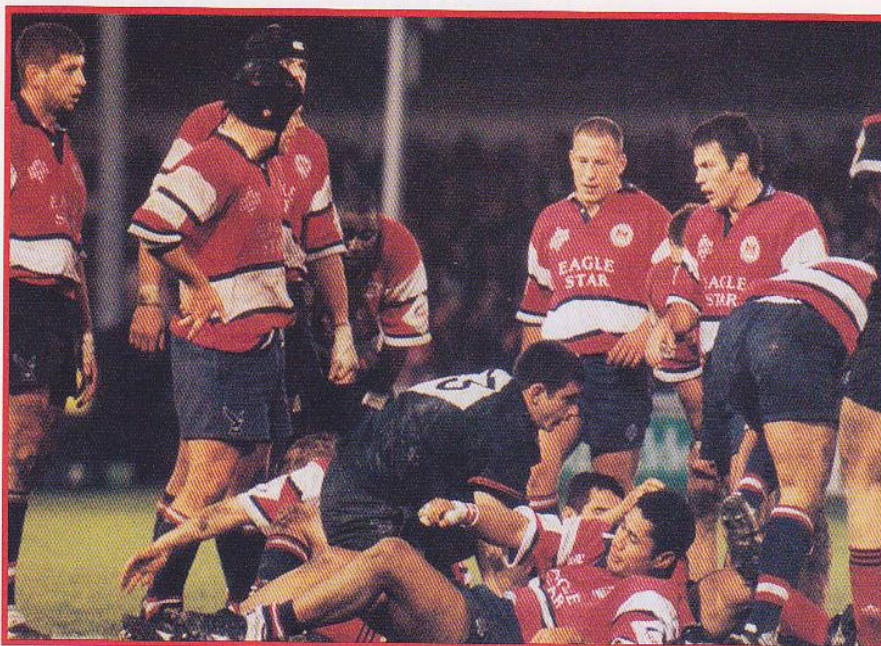
I can't think of a better way to celebrate the arrival of 1999 than to welcome Bath to Kingsholm. Whatever our rivalries, I think anyone who knows anything must agree that today's formidable visitors have been England's leading club of the 1990's. Although they may have slipped a little from the sharpest point of the pinnacle they have fashioned for themselves over the past decade and more, they still remain the team everyone wants to beat - and one of the most difficult sides to achieve that ambition against.

Before I go any further, I really ought to point out that printers and publishers have every right to enjoy a festive Season break, just like most other people. Unfortunately, that means that deadlines change, and I am, in fact,

sitting here and penning these thoughts on Friday, December 18th - a full fifteen days before you're reading them. So I'm afraid you can't expect all that much topicality from me on this occasion.

For example, the latest news I have about today's distinguished opposition is that they have just lost to Northampton, and were deprived of the services of their charismatic captain, Richard Webster, with a suspected fracture to his eye socket. Sounds nasty, and we all hope that, by the time this programme is published, the situation will be a little clearer, and the damage not quite so severe as it seems at the time of writing. After that match, Northampton managed to go and lose to Moseley in the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup, although

I believe they do go through to the next round on home-and-away aggregate. If you believe those two results, you might think that they don't augur well for Bath at Kingsholm. You know far more about the game than that, though, and won't be deceived by mere figures and paper calculations. Quite apart from our visitors' often-proclaimed determination to climb back into what they perceive as their rightful position as Top Dogs, there's nowhere they like to win more than at Kingsholm. The converse is also true, of course. There's no game Gloucester more likes to win than the one against Bath on our own patch. And that's true for everyone from (understandably) Richard Hill, down to the least experienced denizen of The Shed.



Which brings us right back to where I started. A home game against Bath is the best possible way to greet a New Year. And it's probably not a bad way to dispel festive hangovers, either. Great to welcome you again, Bath. We could be in for a game to rival some of our legendary encounters in the past.

Happy 1999

Here we go again. The start of another New Year. Another blank page to be written on. What's it going to hold for Gloucester RFC?

Your guess is as good as mine. It's certainly difficult to make any really confident predictions based on what we've seen so far this season. There have been times when the side has looked as if it could beat absolutely anyone, given a fair crack of the whip and blast on the referee's whistle. There have been times when, not wishing to be too disrespectful, the team looked mediocre. I suppose that, if I were an old fashioned school teacher writing out the term's report, I would use the time-honoured phrase, 'good progress - could do better'.

One of the charms of supporting Gloucester has always been that they are likely, on occasion, to take any side apart, even when none of the pundits have given us a light. Conversely, we sometimes see the side apparently sitting back and allowing the opposition to do as they please. I don't

suppose it seems like that to the lads out on the field, and sometimes they can lift themselves out of a lethargic spell and produce a session of rugby which has everyone counting themselves fortunate to have been there to see it. As I say, there's nothing new about that. It's been going on as long as I have been coming to Kingsholm, and that stretches back to the time when a try was worth three points, and a drop goal, four. It's one of the aspects of the Kingsholm scene which the professional era seems to have done little, as yet, to change.

I wish I could say that it doesn't matter a lot. Unfortunately, in these days when League points are

domestic scene. There are few obvious weaknesses in the side, and we all know that we have the coaching structure to compare with any club's. Not only do we have good players, but we have good rugby brains behind the scenes, too.

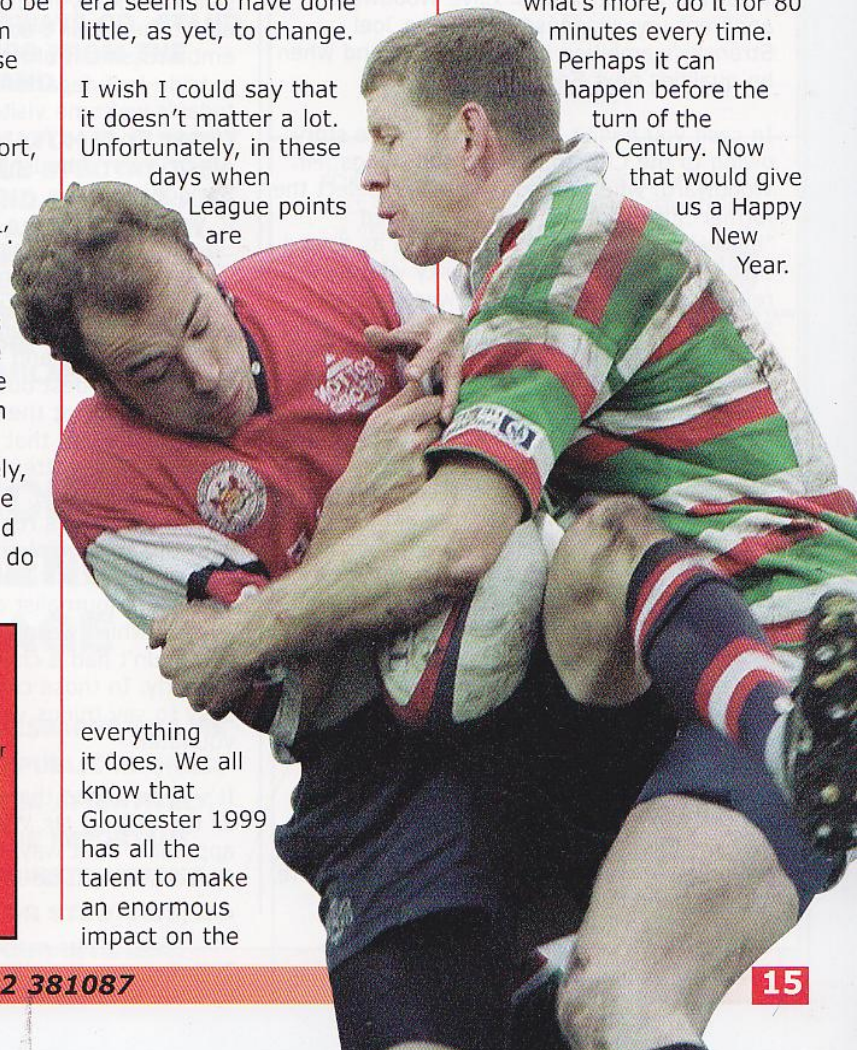
If I could have a New Year wish it would be that Gloucester can grow to produce the standards of which we know they are capable consistently, wherever they are playing, and whatever is at stake, and what's more, do it for 80 minutes every time. Perhaps it can happen before the turn of the Century. Now that would give us a Happy New Year.

everything it does. We all know that Gloucester 1999 has all the talent to make an enormous impact on the

No frills
No fuss
Just a simple
HAPPY NEW YEAR
To everyone who has done me the honour
of reading my notes during 1999

Sincerely,
Your venerable scribe,

PETER ARNOLD



KEEPING UP WITH 'FID'?

Lock forwards aren't usually noted as purveyors of elegant prose, or as masters of the written word. Indeed, unkind people, especially wing three-quarters, used to refer to them as 'donkeys'. I'm delighted to record that our own Rob Fidler has, at last, dispelled the myth of the rough, uncouth, brute-force-and-ignorance second row man.

I'm referring, of course, to the excellent column that Rob provides for the 'Citizen'. If you don't see it, I recommend that you rectify the omission. It's worth the 30p. the paper costs all by itself. For me, the

attraction of the piece is the point of view from which it is written. It's all right for the likes of me to pontificate from the Stand or in the bar, but getting the perspective of a chap who not only has to do the business out in the middle, but also has to endure rigorous fitness and dietary regimes, and horrendous full-contact, fifteen-on-fifteen training sessions on a cold, wet Tuesday evening at Oxstalls.

And, apart from anything else, Rob's column is invariably entertaining. Keep it going, Rob.

You're adding something to the season.

STRANSKY V MANNIX

What are we to make of Clive Woodward's apparent unwillingness to take up Joel Stransky's ambition to play for England when he qualifies next September?

In case you hadn't caught up with the story, owing to the Christmas rush and things, Mr. Woodward, when asked if he would select the former Springbok for England, replied "basically, no." He was also quoted as saying that he would only pick Stransky with "great reluctance," and added that, were he to do so, "it would be a sad day for English rugby." Many people will understand Mr. Woodward's conservative point of view, and have a sneaking regard for it. In a perfect world, and on a level playing field, it would be nice to go along with it. Unfortunately, it's questionable whether England can afford to take that stance.

Many countries, including France and New Zealand, are now playing people who have turned out for some other national team. Even Wales have, in Shane Howarth, an All Black full-back these days, and no-one ever accused them of being less than fiercely protective of their national identity. Times, attitudes, situations all change and evolve, and it doesn't do any good to do a King Canute when you're thinking about them. Perhaps Clive Woodward should remember that even Yorkshire County Cricket Club were forced to modify their almost religious

selection policy in the end. And, it pains one to admit, he doesn't actually have an embarrassment of riches to select from in the outside-half department. It won't be lost on today's welcome visitors to Kingsholm that the current England No.10 was born in South Africa, even if he isn't actually a fully-fledged Springbok.

So why am I banging on about this in a Gloucester v. Bath programme? Simple. What goes for Joel Stransky must, one assumes, also apply to our own Simon Mannix who also qualifies for England this year. Joel Stransky is arguably the best outside-half playing in the Home Nations at the moment. Nevertheless, it could well prove that Simon Mannix would represent the better long-term investment for the England cause. Perhaps we should take Clive Woodward's reported pronouncements with the proverbial pinch of salt. I know, only too well, what it's like to pick up the phone and find a journalist asking questions about a subject which wasn't on your mind, and which you hadn't had a chance to think through properly. In those circumstances, it's fatally easy to say things which come back to haunt you later.

It's to be hoped that, given time to consider all the angles, Mr. Woodward will soften his approach. That way, we might see another Gloucester outside-half playing for England.

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Watching BBC2's old 'Rugby Special' series was a little like having an unsightly boil. You don't particularly like it, but you can't help looking at it and you miss it when it's not there any more.

Whatever the shortcomings of Rugby Special, it was infinitely better than nothing at all, which is precisely what we have had on terrestrial television all season, at least as far as club rugby is concerned. Even Channel Five's 'Rugby Express', which I found refreshing for its comparative lack of pontification and so-called 'analysis', has disappeared from our screens.

So the news that 1999 sees the return of club rugby for those who don't want a satellite dish or a cable connection is very welcome indeed. I understand that the coverage will be screened as part of BBC2's 'Sunday Grandstand' programme, following lengthy and, no doubt,

expensive negotiation with BskyB.

I imagine that this means that the game covered each week will be the same one as that featured on Sky the day before. I am told, however, that there is likely to be a round-up of other important matches as well, rather in the way that Rugby Special used to handle things. Two things cross my mind.

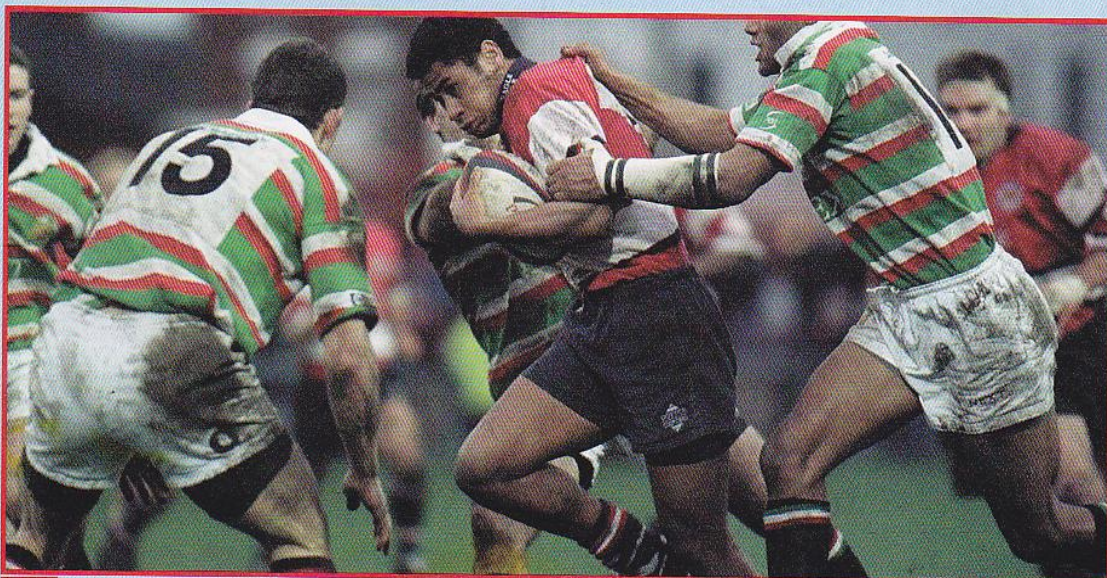
First of all, even people who use satellite or cable don't necessarily get to watch the featured match because it is usually screened on Sky Sports Two, for which one has to pay an extra premium, which, personally, I find a bit of a liberty. The Sunday Grandstand feature, therefore will offer some coverage for old meanies like me who aren't willing to shell out extra hard-earned for the privilege.

Second, one of the criticisms of Rugby Special, particularly in its latter days,

was that you couldn't be sure, week by week, at what time, and even on which day, it was to be screened. Under the Sunday Grandstand formula, at least you'll know that the rugby coverage will appear sometime before tea on Sunday, although the demands of other sporting events will probably mean that the actual timing will be a bit variable. Anyway, 'halitosis is better than no breath', like the man said, so let's rejoice and be thankful.

Just one more thought. How will the new system affect the increasing trend towards playing games on Sundays? We are about to play a scheduled Sunday game on the previous Saturday to meet the requirements of television, which is fair enough, but it might affect those clubs who share grounds with Soccer Clubs and can't easily switch.

Time will tell.



WORCESTER NEXT SATURDAY

The rescheduled game mentioned in the last piece is, in case you hadn't picked up the fact, the visit of Richmond which has been shifted from Sunday, January 17th to Saturday, January 16th, because Sky are coming along to that one, too (Two in a fortnight? We must have been doing something right). Oddly, again for the benefit of the programmers, the kick-off will be (the last I heard) at 4.15pm.

Before that, however, we have a tricky old trip to London Scottish on Tuesday next. Then, next Saturday, we are looking forward to what is, in my humble opinion, one of the most intriguing Kingsholm occasions of recent years. That is, the visit of Worcester in the Tetley Bitter Cup.

Our first thought, of course, is that it will be great fun to see the clutch of old Kingsholm favourites, now doing the business for the emerging, fire-in-the-belly Worcester side, running out again on their native turf. Today's visitors from Bath will especially remember Paul Holford for the match-winning try he scored against them in the early days of the reign of Richard Hill.

They may also recall that Tim Smith converted that one from the touchline, and although Worcester have a certain Mr. Liley's services to call on, I'll bet Les Cusworth will be sorely tempted to put 'Smithy' on at his beloved Kingsholm. It would be great to see him in action again, albeit in unfamiliar colours.

There are, of course, other fondly recalled names in the Worcester squad. Simon Morris, Bruce Fenley, Chris Raymond - you know them as well as I do.

In some ways this isn't a good draw for Gloucester. It will be a nine-day wonder if we lose it, but it would be fatally easy to do so. Worcester are a good outfit, and will be on a real high for the occasion. Remember: a couple of weeks ago they beat Bristol, and that's still an achievement, even though the home side were reduced to fourteen men at the time, thanks to the indiscretions of a certain Australian outside-half.

It could well turn out that the two most influential characters on this game won't be on the field at all. Richard Hill and Les Cusworth are two of the shrewdest rugby brains around, they know each other well, and will be trying to out-think each other from the outset.

It should be quite an event. Please remember that, under the rules of the competition, it's an all-pay occasion, so your Membership card won't get you in. Writing this over two weeks before you're reading it, I have no possible way of knowing if there are any tickets (reduced prices for this game) still available, but you could always ask at the office.

TAILPIECE

Can't resist relating the story which has my vote as the silliest joke of 1998: One training night, a chap wandered in to his local club's clubhouse, and saw a pile of black tarmac leaning against the bar.

"Evening !" he greeted. "Haven't seen you in here before." The tarmac turned, and became immediately obvious that it had already quaffed a drink or three, and was aggressively drunk.

"Wanna make something of it ?", it snarled. Our hero disclaimed any such intention, pointing out that he was just trying to be friendly.

"Just as well !" grouched the tarmac. "Take anybody on, I will ! I'm the hardest, roughest character you'll ever see!"

Just as it was in full flow, the door opened and in walked a pile of red tarmac. The black pile took one look, put down its drink and went and hid under the pool table. The newcomer grinned, "Evening ! Small Scotch, please." Was served, drank up quickly and left with a pleasant nod to all present. The black tarmac emerged from under the table, shamefaced and considerably more sober.

"Hey !", said our friend. "What was all that about ? Thought you said you'd take on anybody ?" "Yeah, I know," confessed the black tarmac. "But not him. He's a cycle path !"

Ouch.

New Image

Since the first game of the season, local schools have taken part in a New Image tournament as part of the pre-match entertainment at Kingsholm. Each week they play a sequence of games against each other following the touch rugby rules.

We would like to thank both the pupils and the staff of the above schools who have taken part in the tournament. The crowd have very much enjoyed watching our future stars and wish them good luck with their rugby.



Schools

Lynworth Juniors, Cheltenham
Churchdown Village, Gloucester
Fieldcourt Juniors, Gloucester
Finlay Road School, Gloucester
Gloucester Road Juniors, Cheltenham
Holy Apostles, Cheltenham
Longlevens, Gloucester
Milton Manor, Tewkesbury
Parton Manor, Gloucester
St Gregory's, Cheltenham
St Mark's, Cheltenham
St Mary's, Gloucester
St Peter's, Gloucester
Hillview County Primary, Hucclecote



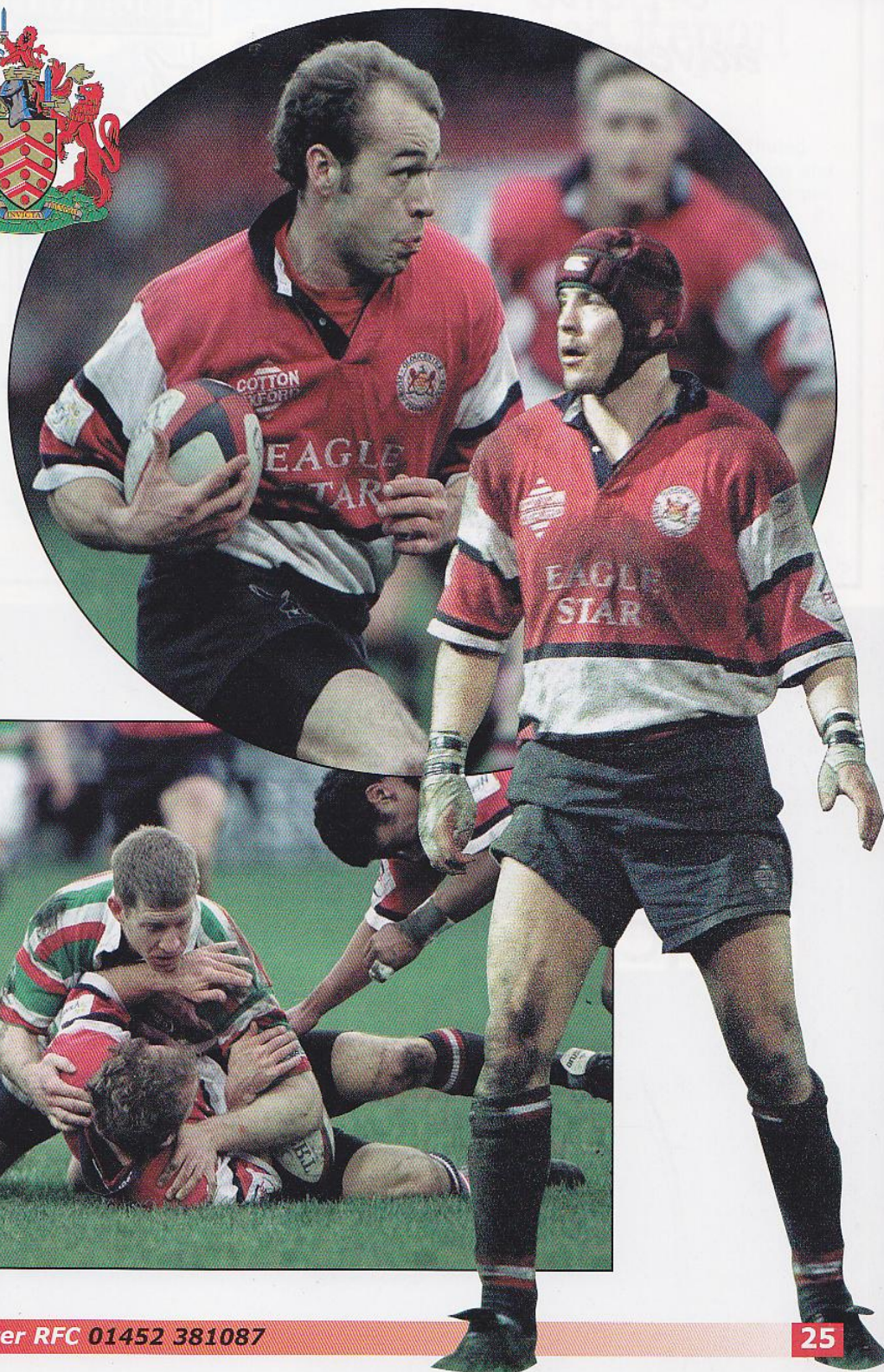
Action Special



Clockwise, from above:

1. Phillippe Saint-Andre literally flies through the air - that's how he achieves his legendary speed.
2. The wind rushes through Brian Johnson's hair as he races to score against Leicester
3. Kingsley Jones stands resolute in defence
4. No - you're supposed to tackle him *before* he scores
5. Gloucester take on the might of the Leicester pack - and win.
6. Ian Sanders leaves the field tired but happy after the home win against Saracens

Action Special



Gloucester RFC 01452 381087

25