

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE V JAPAN, 23 SEP 1976

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By Clifford Smith

### GAME JAPS NO MATCH FOR MIGHTY GLO'SHIRE

#### GLOUCESTERSHIRE 62 PTS, JAPAN 10 PTS

The rising sun of Japanese Rugby was all but blotted out by a relentless storm laid on by county champions, Gloucestershire, in last night's tour opener at Kingsholm. Japan were weakest in the forwards where matches are won and lost. Their out-weighted pack had no answer to the sheer power and ability of John Watkins' eight. Possession is the name of the game and with Gloucestershire taking by far the greater share, Japan's much talked about wizardry behind the scrum could not be brought into play from good attacking positions. Some superb flowing movements had the large crowd cheering when they staged a courageous recovery in the third quarter, but the home side weathered the storm and were scoring almost at will near the end.

They ran in nine goals and two tries with 20 of the points coming in only the last five minutes. The England selectors must have been impressed by left wing Richard Mogg, of Gloucester, easily the outstanding threequarter on view. And England veteran, Mike Burton, gave them a timely reminder that he is still very much in the running to retain his place. Mogg scored three tries, one a dream effort, begun when he received from Dave Sorrel on the Japanese 10-yard line. After an explosive burst, Mogg side-stepped two opponents before going over near the posts. Strong running centre, Richard Jardine, also gained a tries hat-trick in another great performance. Japan, who were out training on the pitch shortly before the kick-off, must have wondered what had hit them as Gloucestershire powerhouse got off to a tremendous start.

A break by Burton ended with his front row colleague, Gordon Sargent, scoring the first try after only two minutes' play. Sargent had to have treatment for damage to his nose received in the movement, but he was able to carry on. Japan, with fly-half Matsuo putting in some useful tactical kicks, tried to hit back, but were soon in deeper trouble as Mogg and Jardine got their first tries and then number eight, Alvin Troughton, scored. Burton also started this movement, and Jardine gave the scoring pass. Centre Brian Vine was next to score, rounding off an attack which began with Peter Kingston and went across the back division. At last Japan gained a crumb of encouragement with a try in injury time by their talented left wing, Ken Aruga, following a dash and well-timed pass by centre, Yoshida.

The try was nullified when Steve Mills, making his debut, scored just before half-time. This movement was begun by fly-half, Chris Williams, and again Burton was involved. Gloucestershire led 34-6 at the interval and Dave Sorrel had converted six tries – he added three more conversions in the second half to bring his tally to 18 points. Japan looked a vastly different side for 20 minutes of the second half and their persistent, skilful efforts brought a try. Matsuo chipped ahead and right wing Fujiwara was there to gather and touch down. Matsuo gained his reward by adding the points.

Gloucestershire were made to look sluggish at this stage, but the picture changed dramatically as they returned to the offensive and swept to victory with tries by Mogg and Jardine (two each) and Chris Williams. The pack were running like threequarters towards the end, each trying to get their names on the list of scorers. Japan were shattered by the might of Gloucestershire, but one piece of speculation was intriguing spectators after the match – what would have happened if Japan's backs had been playing behind the Gloucestershire pack?

Teams:

Gloucestershire: Dave Sorrel (Bristol); Bob Clewes, Brian Vine, Richard Jardine, Richard Mogg; Chris Williams, Peter Kingston; Gordon Sargent, Steve Mills, Mike Burton, Steve Boyle (all Gloucester), Roger Powell (Llanelli), John Watkins, capt (Gloucester), Alvin Troughton, Peter Polledri (both Bristol).

Japan: Noboyuki Ueyama; Masaru Fujiwara, Shigetaka Mori, Masao Yoshida, Kan Aruga; Yuji Matsuo, Akio Ueda; Tsukasa Takata (capt), Manabu Sasada, Masayuki Miyauchi, Toshio Terai, Naoshi Kumagai, Keiichi Toyoyama, Ichiro Kobayashi, Hideo Akama.

Referee: D L Head (London Society)

Estimated attendance: 10,000