

GLOUCESTER MATCHES AGAINST NEW ZEALAND TEAMS

Gloucester 9 Wellington 6, 13th October 1966

The Athletic Club of Wellington were the first New Zealand club side to visit Kingsholm.

Gloucester: D B W Ainge; N J Foice, R G Pitt, R A Watkins, K R Morris; J Groves, M H Booth; W L J Leeke, M J Nicholls, J L Fowke, R G Long, A Brinn, G G White (captain), T E Davis, R Smith

Wellington: E Jenkins; G Hall-Watson, R McCullough, G Catley, B Brown; G Watt, M Neale; B Jefferies, T McCashin, H Hutton, D Barton, N McEwan (captain), R Dellabarka, D Long, T Lister

Referee: Mr P Brooke (Yorkshire)

Gloucester opened the scoring when Tony Davis started a move in his own half, passed swiftly to Mickey Booth, who handed on to David Ainge, the full-back's clever break taking play deep into Enemy territory, where Nick Foice rounded off the spectacular move by hurling over in the corner. Wellington responded with a try of their own when Hall-Watson shot over, but Ainge established a half-time lead with two penalties.

Home supporters suffered many palpitations in the second half as the Gloucester defence was stretched to the limit. The pack stood up well to the battering with Gary White, Tony Davis and Mike Nicholls to the fore, Booth orchestrated the rearguard action and frequently relieved the pressure with touch kicks, while Ainge provided a master class at the back. Wellington were twice held up on the line, but were repelled, and were therefore restricted to five penalty attempts, of which Jenkins succeeded with only one.

Gloucester 18 Taranaki 6, 13th March 1979

Taranaki were on their first world tour, led by Graham Mourie, the All Blacks captain. This was their only game in England, arriving from Wales and departing for France and Japan. The players had to cope with a muddy Kingsholm and a slippery ball in front of some 4,000 spectators.

Gloucester: P Butler; R Clewes, R Mogg, D Pointon, L Dick; C Williams, S Baker; G Sargent, S Mills, P Blakeway, S Boyle, J Orwin, J Watkins (captain), J Simonett, P Wood

Taranaki: S Davidson; M Watts, P Broederlow, P Martin, T Brown; J Cameron, P Fleming; B McEldowney, G White, J Thwaites, J Magon, I Eliason, R Fraser, G Wetton, G Mourie (captain)

Referee: Mr C Norling (Wales)

Gloucester tore into the visitors so enthusiastically that it was half an hour before Taranaki were able to launch their first attack. However, their defence was stout and it took a well-oiled lineout move by Gloucester to produce the first score. Steve Boyle caught cleanly and fed the ball to John Watkins who crashed over at the front of the line. He scored his second

from good support play and from the restart carried the ball 40 yards; the captain was leading from the front in fine style. He nearly scored his third on the end of an exciting move involving Gordon Sargent, Chris Williams and Phil Blakeway, but a pass was judged forward. But the hat trick was not long in coming, when Steve Mills dribbled the ball along the touchline and tapped the ball inside; Davidson missed an attempted fly-hack and Watkins was on hand to gather up the loose ball and score. Taranaki had only two penalties to show for their efforts, and Boyle put the result beyond doubt with a try two minutes from the end, which Butler converted. This was Gloucester and John Watkins at their glorious best.

Gloucester 3 Auckland 34, 14th February 1984

Auckland flew home the day after this encounter at the end of a short five-match tour on which they had won every game. This was a special match for Malcolm Preedy who had lost his place in the Gloucester team after returning from a season playing for Auckland, but was selected to face his former team mates. They may have found him difficult to recognise since he had shaved off the long hair and bushy beard which he had sported whilst playing in New Zealand. A pea souper fog at Kingsholm reduced the expected crowd of 10,000 to about 4,000 and they were absolutely bewildered as to what was going on. In order to write his report the Citizen reporter was reduced to quizzing the players and referee after the event to discover what had happened, but even then the backs were unable to provide much enlightenment.

Gloucester: P Webb; D Morgan, P Taylor, R Mogg, N Price; M Hamlin, S Baker (captain); M Preedy, S Mills, R Pascall, J Fidler, J Orwin, J Gadd, M Teague, D Spencer

Auckland: L Harris; J Kirwan, J Stanley, H Matopo, G Cunningham; G Fox, T Burcher; J Borish, L Abercrombie, J Drake, A Haden, G Whetton, A Whetton, A Harvey, G Rich

Referee: Mr Richards

It is believed that Gloucester opened the scoring with a Mike Hamlin penalty, but thereafter it was all Auckland. They scored six tries through Rich, Harris, Whetton, Stanley, Cunningham and Kirwan, with Grant Fox converting five. Graham Spring, the announcer, was fooled into declaring half-time when the players were just returning to the half-way line after a try, and the referee *“finally called a halt eleven minutes from time, although by then most people had retired into the bars to talk about what they had not seen”*. The Auckland manager, Ron Dun, summarised the situation diplomatically *“they say rugby is a game for players and tonight that was proved”*.

Gloucester 7 Canterbury (New Zealand) 70, 19th November 1994

Canterbury had already won the first six games of their tour by the time they arrived at Kingsholm. Divisional matches and injuries had reduced Gloucester to six first-choice players. It proved to be a hopeless mismatch, Gloucester being utterly outclassed by a Canterbury side which put on a magnificent display of running rugby and relentless support play. The result went into the record books and remains there up to the time of writing in 2016 as Gloucester's worst ever defeat in terms of both points total and points difference.

Gloucester: T Smith; M Nicholson, I Morgan, M Roberts, L Osborne; M Kimber, B Fenley; A Deacon (captain), D Kearsey, P Jones, S Devereux, M Cornwell, P Ashmead, I Smith, G Keyse

Canterbury: S Forrest; P Bale, T Matson, M Mayerhofer, D Gibson; A Mehrtens, A Flynn; R Loe, M Sexton (captain), T Kele, M McAtamney, G Kelly, C England, A Gardiner, I Morgan; Replacement: L Beck

Referee: Mr M Bayliss (Gloucester)

Gloucester started well, Paul Ashmead being held up over the line, Martyn Kimber missing a penalty and Lee Osborne almost getting over for a try. Then the juggernaut got into gear and four tries from Bale, England, Morgan and Matson gave Canterbury a 22-0 lead at half-time. Gloucester faded further in the second half, Bale scored two more tries to register his hat trick, and more came from Gardiner, Forrest (2), Kele, Loe, and Mehrtens, who converted only five of the twelve tries. So it could have been worse, and the whitewash was avoided in the last five minutes when a touch kick by Kimber led to a line-out on the Canterbury line, from which Simon Devereux dived straight over for a try, which Kimber converted.

NEW ZEALAND YUGOSLAV RUGBY TEAM

The NZ Yugoslav team was organised to undertake rugby tours around the world and included players who had performed at provincial level in New Zealand. The objectives of the tours were to give the opportunity for players and supporters of Yugoslav parentage to visit the birthplace of their parents, to help promote rugby in Yugoslavia and to maintain contacts between Yugoslavian players in New Zealand. Each tour centred on Yugoslavia, including a fixture against the Yugoslav national team, but was extended to take in other parts of Europe. They first toured in 1978 and made their first visit to Kingsholm four years later. They were never judged to be capable of taking on a full Gloucester team, but they were competitive against sides which were a mixture of First XV and United players. They appeared at Kingsholm on three occasions.

Gloucester 16 NZ Yugoslav 6, 19th October 1982

Gloucester 18 NZ Yugoslav 13, 30th October 1986

Gloucester 0 NZ Yugoslav 16, 30th October 1990