

RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION CLUB COMPETITION

# John Player Special Cup Final

## BATH v WASPS

TWICKENHAM 26th APRIL 1986

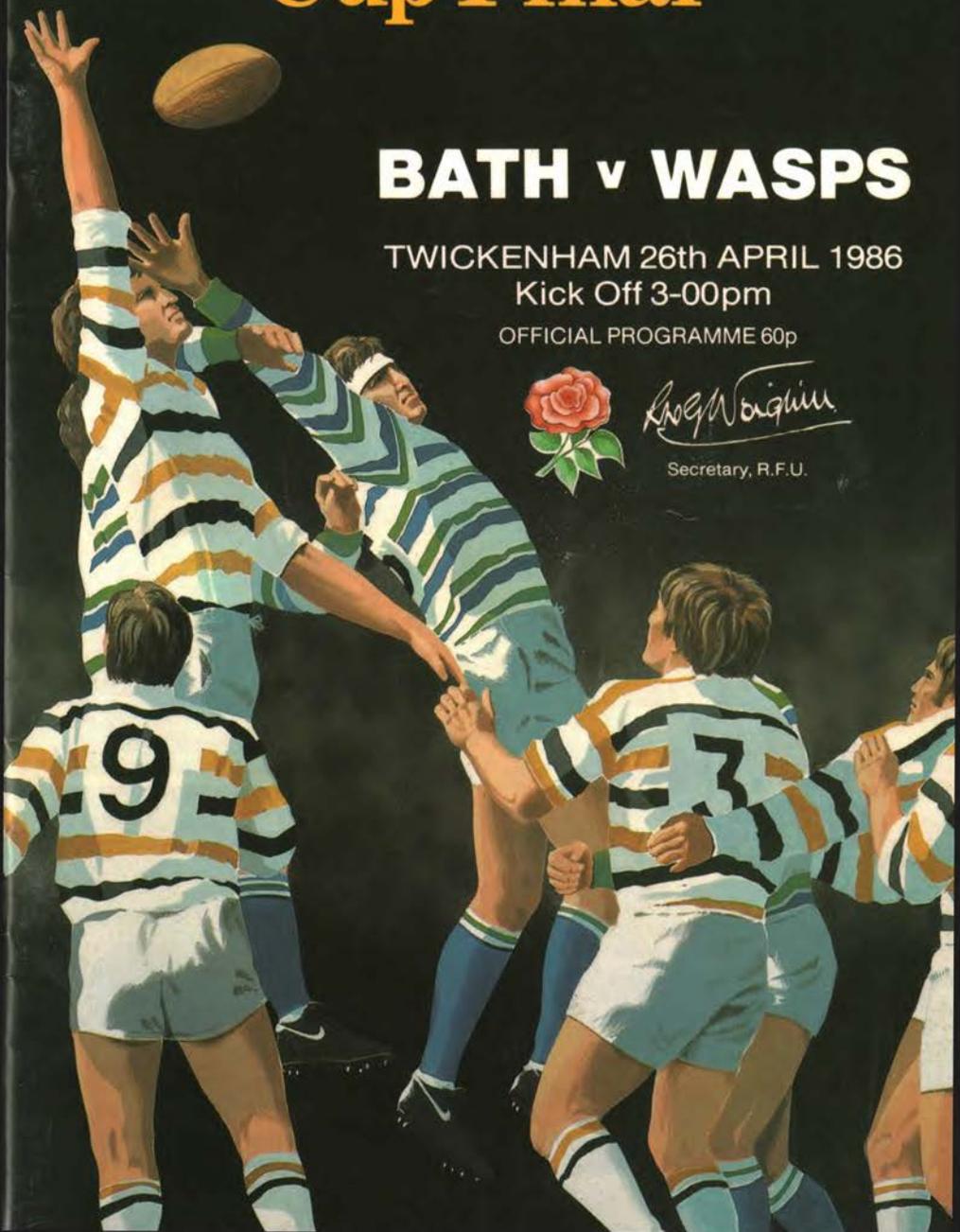
Kick Off 3-00pm

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 60p



*Kooy Woiglin*

Secretary, R.F.U.





# John Player Special Cup 1985-86



## BATH

White Jerseys

- 16. † C. R. MARTIN
- 15. † D. M. TRICK
- 14. † J. A. PALMER (captain)
- 12. † S. J. HALLIDAY
- 11. † A. SWIFT
- 10. † S. BARNES
- 9. † R. J. HILL
- 1. † G. J. CHILCOTT
- 2. G. DAWE
- 3. M. R. LEE
- 4. J. MORRISON
- 5. † N. C. REDMAN
- 6. R. A. SPURRELL
- 7. † J. P. HALL
- 8. † P. D. SIMPSON

Replacements: 17. C. Stanley  
 18. P. Cue  
 19. B. Trevaskis  
 20. G. Bess  
 21. C. C. Lilley  
 22. D. Egerton.

Referee:  
**F. A. Howard**  
 (Liverpool Referees' Society)  
 KICK-OFF 3.00 p.m.



Touch Judges:  
**R. C. Quittenton** (London/Sussex Societies)  
**L. Prideaux** (North Midlands Society)

## WASPS

Black Jerseys

- 15. † N. C. STRINGER
- 14. † S. T. SMITH
- 13. † R. M. CARDUS (captain)
- 12. R. PELLOW
- 11. † M. D. BAILEY
- 10. G. L. REES
- 9. S. M. BATES
- 1. † P. A. G. RENDALL
- 2. A. SIMMONS
- 3. J. A. PROBYN
- 4. J. BONNER
- 5. M. C. F. PINNEGAR
- 6. K. R. MOSS
- 7. M. RIGBY
- 8. M. A. ROSE

Replacements: 16. P. Minihan  
 17. K. Titcombe  
 18. P. Balcombe  
 19. A. Isichei  
 20. J. Samuel  
 21. J. Ellison

**RULES FOR FINAL:** If after 40 minutes of play each way the scores be equal, the tries be equal and the goals from tries be equal, there shall be an immediate period of replay between the teams of 10 minutes each way, with a one minute interval. If no result is then achieved, the match shall be adjudged a draw.

# A Most Rewarding Experience

By Peter Wheeler



Peter Wheeler in his international days

"I say," said the Harlequin supporter at his club's home John Player Cup semi-final tie in 1980. "I do believe Leicester have more supporters than the Quins".

Old Brockleians have more supporters than the Quins', came the dry Leicester retort.

This is no sleight on the Old Sequins but merely an illustration of what the John Player Cup can do for the support of a club and indeed a City and County. I am sure that Coventry and Gosforth experienced it in the 'seventies and Bristol and Bath are enjoying it in the 'eighties. Leicester had a wonderful flirtation for six years in between and indeed supporters still book their Cup Final coaches in January in the optimistic hope of another Leicester appearance.

What is the John Player Cup Experience?

Well it is very difficult to explain to people who have not been involved and probably appears to them as a lot of fuss about nothing. But to anyone who does get involved it provides as rewarding an experience in rugby that can be obtained at any level.

It is a gradual process of people associating with a club that has success in home and away cup ties culminating in a Final visit to Twickenham.

Numbers increase because everybody who went to the previous round enjoyed themselves and spread the good news so that numbers increase.

As a player I can remember many enjoyable away ties where clubs went to enormous efforts to make players and supporters welcome. Roundhay and Liverpool particularly come to mind where their players efforts on the pitch were matched by the warmth of welcome and hard work off the pitch to make the day memorable for all concerned.

The big day of course is the final and a visit to H.Q. The result is not quite irrelevant but a victory is really icing on the cake. For a spectator it is an adventure starting with the meeting to catch the dozens of coaches that pour out of the City on the Saturday morning. After Leicester's first Cup Final appearance we subsequently travelled down to Twickenham on the morning of the match instead of staying in London on the Friday night.

I am sure it helped the players attitude and performance to see the thousands of supporters going down the motorway in cars and coaches with club banners and scarves so prominently displayed.

Then the novelty of seeing so many friendly faces in an unusual environment, the West Car Park seems like Leicester market.

Defeat does nothing to dampen enthusiasm for the following year and all the time the numbers of people enjoying the cup ties is increasing. Home ties attract 8,000-10,000 and more. Away games tie up coach fleets within a 50 mile radius.

Another final and this time a win and a moment equal in emotional intensity to the winning of a cap, a grand slam or the selection for a Lions Tour. Because it was achieved with your mates, the guys you have trained with and played with in mud and rain, who you shared the good times and hard times for many years. Success on a different level but no less rewarding.

Then there is the post-final adulation that involves a continuous round of appearances on the Town Hall balcony, on the local radio station, and taking of the cup to apparently every pub and working men's club in Leicestershire as a thank you to them for their support.

Probably our most memorable final was against Gosforth where we were going for three in a row and the chance of keeping the cup forever.

We had travelled down to Twickenham on the morning of the match having read all the morning papers and listened to the previews on radio and television. We were not exactly heartened by the realisation that the only two journalists who gave us any chance at all against the all-conquering Gosforth pack were the rugby correspondents of the *Leicester Mercury* and *Radio Leicester*.

However, in the dressing room before the game I was telling the lads the same old rubbish I told them before every game, i.e. get stuck in early and if we got a decent bit of possession early on, not to worry about running from wherever we were. With just a note of caution because if we did run it, got knocked down and they hacked on and scored, it would be a travesty. I just noticed one of our props, not the brightest member of the team, turn to a team-mate and say "How many points will they get for a travesty?"

There was no travesty fortunately and we won the 1st John Player Cup outright. It is displayed in Leicester's Club House as a symbol of an era that brought a wealth of enjoyment to the players, supporters and people of Leicester. If Bath should win today they will surely deserve at least a replica for what will be a marvellous achievement.

For Wasps in their first final perhaps today will be the launch pad for the next three years.

In either case it's a great day for both clubs and Good Luck to them both. Perhaps one day the Old Brockleians might make the final, then they really would have more support than the 'Quins,



John Player Special Cup Final 1985. Bath's captain Roger Spurrell raises the John Player Special Cup aloft after Bath's victory.