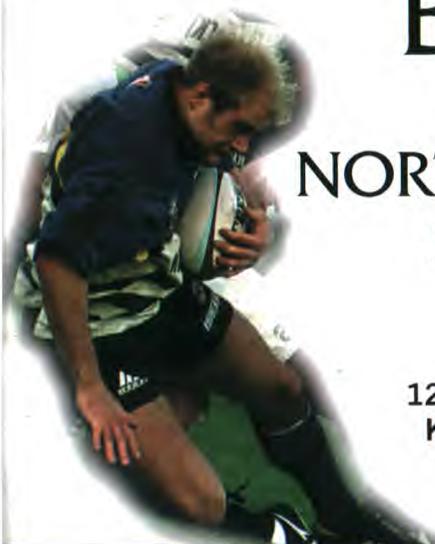


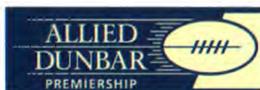


BATH VS NORTHAMPTON SAINTS

Saturday
12 December 1998
Kick-Off 3.00pm



BLACKTHORN



OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME
£2.00



Bath Rugby



Northampton



Official Sponsor

BLACKTHORN

No.	PLAYER	POSITION	PLAYER	No.
15	Iain Balshaw	Full Back	Nick Beal	15
14	Ieuan Evans	Right Wing	Craig Moir	14
13	Kevin Maggs	Centre	Andy Blyth	13
12	Jeremy Guscott	Centre	Matt Allen	12
11	Adedayo Adebayo	Left Wing	Jon Sleightholme	11
10	Mike Catt	Fly Half	Paul Grayson	10
9	Steve Hatley	Scrum Half	Matt Dawson	9
1	Dave Hilton	Prop	Garry Pagel	1
2	Mark Regan	Hooker	Federico Mendez	2
3	Victor Ubogu	Prop	Matt Stewart	3
4	Nigel Redman	Lock	Richard Metcalfe	4
5	Ben Sturnham	Lock	Tim Rodber	5
6	Russell Earnshaw	Flanker	Grant Seely	6
7	Richard Webster (Capt)	Flanker	Budge Pountney	7
8	Dan Lyle	No. 8	Pat Lam	8

Official equipment supplier



Official kit supplier



REFEREE
Ed Morrison
TOUCH JUDGES
Steve Makison
Geoff Williams

No.	PLAYER	Replacements	PLAYER	No.
16	Andy Nicol		Dom Malone	16
17	Andy Long		Ali Hepher	17
18	Kevin Yates		David Dantiacq	18
19	Jon Callard		Chris Johnson	19
20	Tokunbo Adebayo		Matt Volland	20
21	Deiniol Jones		Jon Phillips	21
22	Eric Peters		Simon Foale	22



Northampton



FOR probably the first time since leagues were formed, Northampton Saints visit the Recreation ground above Bath in the table.

The Saints, who have never won a league or cup game at the Rec, have made a hugely promising start to the current campaign, including a six match winning streak.

They share top spot with midland rivals, Leicester, one of only three teams to inflict defeat on the Saints so far this season, the others being Saracens - on the opening day of the season - and Newcastle, when many internationals were absent.

Director of Rugby Ian McGeechan and the squad are keen to shed the tag of under-achievers, and club chairman Keith Barwell initiated a pre-season spending spree to recruit proven winners.

That resulted in four signings, the most significant being Allied Dunbar Player of 1997/98, Pat Lam, from champions Newcastle - a stunning coup for the Northampton club.

The Saints also signed former Bath hooker, Federico Mendez, making a return to the Rec as is England winger, Jon Sleightholme, Frenchman, David Dantiacq, and Newcastle lock,

Richard Metcalfe, who has made massive strides since the start of the season as befits a man of seven foot.

The Saints have a 100 per cent record at Franklins Gardens, and have won on their travels at London Scottish and London Irish. Like Bath, the Saints welcome back their internationals this weekend after a month's absence, buoyed by the sensational win over South Africa at Twickenham last Saturday, which featured players from both of today's sides.

After sitting on the bench for the two World Cup qualifiers and the defeat against Australia, full back Nick Beal got his chance because of Matt Perry's injury, and is sure to provide stern competition with



the Bath man for the No. 15 jersey. Scrum-half, Matt Dawson, who led England on the summer tour, relished yet another win over the Spring boks, having been a key man in the British Lions success of 1997.

Last Saturday he was thrust into the role of goal-kicker in the absence of injured Northampton fly half, Paul

Grayson, and after one missed kick, Dawson held his nerve to come up with the two match-winning penalties, that sent players and fans into ecstasy as England foiled South Africa's attempt to set a new world record for successive victories.

Most satisfying of all for Saints fans was to see the re-birth of Tim Rodber's international career as a lock in partnership with Martin Johnson.

Former Bath ace, Stuart Barnes, now a television and newspaper pundit, devoted his entire Monday column in the *Daily Telegraph* to Rodber, who he dubbed *Captain Indestructible*.

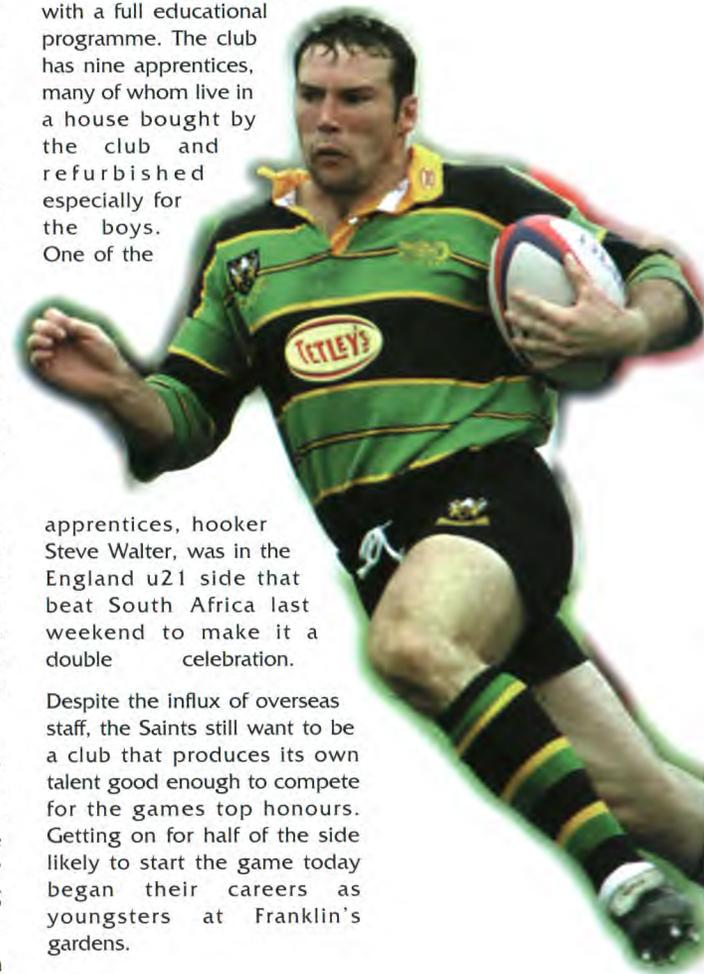
In his very early days at Northampton, now some 10 years ago, Rodber had a few games at lock before successfully being switched to the back row, going on to become an England International and British Lion.

This last month also saw open side flanker, Budge Pountney, win his first cap for Scotland. Pountney has risen through the ranks at Northampton, a policy the club is continuing throughout the professional era.

Former British Lion star, Martin Bayfield, assists Brett Taylor, still on the books as a scrum-half, in

running the Saints' Academy, sponsored by Nationwide, which combines rugby with a full educational programme. The club has nine apprentices, many of whom live in a house bought by the club and refurbished especially for the boys. One of the

From Brian Barron, Northampton Press Officer.



apprentices, hooker Steve Walter, was in the England u21 side that beat South Africa last weekend to make it a double celebration.

Despite the influx of overseas staff, the Saints still want to be a club that produces its own talent good enough to compete for the games top honours. Getting on for half of the side likely to start the game today began their careers as youngsters at Franklin's gardens.