

THE OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BATH RUGBY - PRICE £2.50

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VS LEICESTER TIGERS

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP SATURDAY 9TH MARCH 2002 KICK OFF 2.15^{PM}

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ZURICH
PREMIERSHIP



TODAY'S

TEAMS



IAIN BALSHAW	(15) FULL BACK	AUSTIN HEALEY
TOM VOYCE	(6-0) WING	FREDDIE TUILAGI
KEVIN MAGGS	(13) CENTRE	OLLIE SMITH
MIKE TINDALL	(02) CENTRE	ROD KAVER
SIMON DANIELLI	(11) WING	STEVE BOOTH
OLLY BARKLEY	(10) FLY HALF	ANDY GOODE
KEVIN DALZELL	(9) SCRUM HALF	JAMIE HAMILTON
DAVE BARNES	(01) PROP	GRAHAM ROWNTREE
MARK REGAN	(02) HOOKER	RICHARD COCKERILL
JOHN MALLETT	(03) PROP	DARREN GARFORTH
STEVE BORTHWICK	(04) LOCK	MARTIN JOHNSON (C)
DANNY GREWCOCK	(05) LOCK	BEN KAY
GAVIN THOMAS	(06) FLANKER	JOSH KRONFELD
NATHAN THOMAS	(07) FLANKER	NEIL BACK
DAN LYLE (C)	(08) NO.8	MARTIN CORRY

REPLACEMENTS

ROB CHRYSTIE	(00)	DORIAN WEST
ANDY LONG	(01)	LEWIS MOODY
SIMON EMMS	(02)	TIM STIMPSON
ALEX CROCKETT	(03)	LOUIS DEACON
ROB THIRLBY	(04)	HARRY ELLIS
JAMES SCAYS BROOK	(05)	PERRY FRESHWATER
MARK GABEY	(06)	GLENN GELDERBLOOM

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE STEVE LANDER (RFU)

TOUCH JUDGES GERAINT MUTTON-JONES, ASHLEY REAY (RFU)

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WELCOME TO LEICESTER



As they take to the field here at the Recreation Ground this afternoon, Leicester Tigers find themselves in the rare position of being on the brink of wrapping up their fourth consecutive Zurich Premiership title, and we have only just entered March!

Such has been the dominance that they have exerted this season in the Premiership, that Dean Richards' side are



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already 17 points clear of Gloucester in second place with just seven matches to go. Even if they do slip up a couple of times on the way (and they certainly can afford to do so), the Tigers will coast home quite comfortably for a record number of consecutive titles won.

Considering that this season was supposed to be the closest yet, this is quite an achievement from Richards' class of 2002 who obviously failed to read the script. Expected to crack without the playmaking presence of Australian Pat Howard, the Welford Road outfit has emerged a stronger side than the treble

Championship and Heineken Cup last term.

So what has been the secret? On paper the Tigers should have suffered most with losses to International squads and the all too often injuries which can come as a result of representative involvement. Clever new signings in Josh Kronfeld and Rod Kafer has kept an antipodean flavour, but importantly has brought two players to Welford Road who are both winners at the highest level and whose experience has rubbed off on the talented youngsters around him. However, it is undoubtedly a change in approach to the game that has shaped the Tigers into the great side that they are today.

Think of Leicester and you will probably associate them with no-frills, win at all costs rugby, however this is just a myth as there is a change afoot at Welford Road. They have learnt to use the whole field, playing an expansive game that complements the great skill and panache of the likes of Healey, Booth, Kafer and Geordan Murphy. Indeed Murphy and Booth top the Premiership's try-scoring table this season.

It is the mark of an excellent, indeed World Class side, that when on the rare occasion they find themselves under pressure, that they have the rare ability to steal victory from the jaws of defeat. They do this by reverting to type, playing the familiar shove-it-up-your-jumper style of rugby, which practically no side in the Premiership has an answer to. Simply, they know how to win.

However, as we witnessed in Paris last weekend, even the mighty can fall, but Bath Rugby will need to be at their creative best if they are to break down what is the finest defence in European