



SPONSORS



BATH RUGBY VS LONDON WASPS

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP
SATURDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2004
KICK-OFF 2.40pm



VIRGIN MOBILE MAN OF THE MATCH

TEXT - 07952 100 555

THE OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BATH RUGBY

PRICE £2.50

Bath Rugby

London Wasps



LINEUPS

- Tain BALSCHAW 15
- Wylie HUMAN 14
- Andrew HIGGINS 13
- Olly BARKLEY 12
- Simon DANIELLI 11
- Chris MALONE 10
- Martyn WOOD 9
- David FLATMAN 1
- Jonathan HUMPHREYS 2
- Duncan BELL 3
- Steve BORTHWICK 4
- Simon GREWCOCK (C) 5
- Andy BEATTIE 6
- Michael LIPMAN 7
- Isaac FEANATI 8

REPLACEMENTS

- Hentie MARTENS 16
- Lee MEARS 17
- Matt STEVENS 18
- Alex CROCKETT 19
- Kevin MAGGS 20
- James SCAYSBROOK 21
- Rob FIDLER 22

HEAD COACH:

John CONNOLLY



LINEUPS

- 15 Mark VAN GISBERGEN
- 14 Josh LEWSEY
- 13 Mark DENNEY
- 12 Fraser WATERS
- 11 Tom VOYCE
- 10 Alex KING
- 9 Rob HOWLEY
- 1 Craig DOWD
- 2 Trevor LEOTA
- 3 Will GREEN
- 4 Simon SHAW
- 5 Martin PURDY
- 6 Joe WORSLEY
- 7 Jonny O'CONNOR
- 8 Lawrence DALLAGLIO (C)

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Ben GOTTING
- 17 Tim PAYNE
- 18 Paul VOLLEY
- 19 George SKIVINGTON
- 20 Peter RICHARDS
- 21 Ayoola ERINLE
- 22 John RUDD

HEAD COACH:

Warren GATLAND



TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE Chris WHITE

TOUCH JUDGES Ashley REAY & Peter HUCKLE





TODAY'S VISITORS

London Wasps

By Dom Rumbles

So this is it, first versus second in the Zurich Premiership at a packed Recreation Ground and expectations could not be higher.

It is not quite a do-or-die showdown as ten points separate the two sides, but if Wasps go on to win this afternoon then they will certainly believe that they have the capability to go on and finish top of the pile. Wasps were recently labelled the best club side in World rugby by one top coach, and although that is a pretty big statement to make, Warren Gatland's side are certainly the form side in the Zurich Premiership.

This afternoon's encounter will prove the acid test for Wasps. Hot on the heels of Bath Rugby, the Wycombe based side have the best offence in

the Zurich Premiership. They have scored 393 points in attack whilst they have crossed the whitewash 38 times and are averaging nearly three tries per game. It is an incredible record when you consider that we have seen some dire conditions during these winter months.

However, the question will be whether they can break the meanest defence in the Zurich Premiership enough times to record their seventh straight win away from home. Bath Rugby have conceded just 187 points this season including fourteen tries and average the conceding of just one try per match.

It is obvious therefore that something has to give this afternoon. Wasps certainly have the players required to

break Bath Rugby's defence. Newly appointed England Captain Lawrence Dallaglio is back to the best form of his career and leads from the front what is an extremely mobile pack that includes the likes of England hopefuls Joe Worsley and Simon Shaw. However, Wasps are also a fearsome force in the tight. Trevor Loeota can be devastating when he is at his best, whilst Stephen Jones of the Sunday Times recently described Craig Dowd as the best New Zealand prop.

However, Wasps have the rapier backs to match their marauding forward pack. Josh Lewsey had a magnificent World Cup and is dangerous on the wing for Wasps, whilst we all know about the attacking capabilities of Tom Voce who can be brilliant in open play. Alex King is one of the best play makers in the Premiership and combines well with British Lion Rob Howley at half back. However, it is the centre combinations where Wasps hold their trump cards. Stuart Abbott may well be injured, but Wasps have significant strength in depth in this position. Fraser Waters is one of the most underrated players in the Premiership, and combines well with Mark Denney. Watch out for Ayoola Erinle who could start in the centre. The youngster has been one of the finds of the season for Wasps and is powerful enough to punch holes through the midfield whilst also possessing the pace to get away from his man.

This promises to be an enthralling encounter. If Wasps win today the chase to secure that automatic place to the final will be on and they will hold the psychological advantage ahead of a what is likely to be a winner takes all match between the two sides at Twickenham at the end of May.

Josh Lewsey

