

BATH RUGBY

VS CASTRES-OLYMPIQUE

HEINEKEN CUP ROUND ONE

SATURDAY OCTOBER 7TH 2006




KICK OFF 6.05^{PM}





THE teams







-  Matt Perry
-  Iain Balshaw
-  Mike Tindall
-  Kevin Maggs
-  Adedayo Adebayo
- Shaun Berne
- Gareth Cooper
- David Barnes
-  Mark Regan
-  John Mallett
-  Martin Haag
- Steve Borthwick
- Gavin Thomas
-  Ben Clarke (c)
-  Dan Lyle

- (15) Full Back
- (14) Wing
- (13) Centre
- (12) Centre
- (11) Wing
- (10) Fly Half
- (9) Scrum Half
- (1) Prop
- (2) Hooker
- (3) Prop
- (4) Lock
- (5) Lock
- (6) Flanker
- (7) Flanker
- (8) No.8

- Francois Plisson
- Marc Biboulet
- Galliaume Delmotte 
- Eric Artiguste
- Philippe Garrigues
- Gregor Townsend 
- Frederick Segulier
- Laurent Toussaint
- Remy Vigneaux
- Levan Tsabadze
- Thierry Bourdet
- Jeremy Davidson (c) 
- Arnaud Costes 
- Jose Daiz
- Ismaila Lassissi

replacements

-  Jon Preston
-  Andy Long
- Chris Horsman
- Rob Thirlby
-  Phil de Glanville
- Angus Gardiner
-  Nathan Thomas

- (16)
- (17)
- (18)
- (19)
- (20)
- (21)
- (22)

- Mauricio Reggiardo 
- Ghislian Benazet
- Christian Batut
- Frederic Lалуque
- Guillaume Taussac
- Adam Larkin
- Norm Berryman 





VISITORS Castres-Olympique

LED IN THE RUGBY HOT BED IN THE HEART OF THE WEST FRANCE, CASTRES-OLYMPIQUE WERE ONE OF THE GIANTS OF POST- WAR FRENCH RUGBY.

The club achieved back to back titles in the late 1940's. However, since those glory days success has been thin on the ground as Castres-Olympique have struggled in the shadow of their neighbours Toulouse. The only success of recent years was in 1993 when the club won the French Championship for the third time, defeating Grenoble in the final.

Castres-Olympiques' history in the Heineken cup has also been indifferent. In the competition's inaugural year of 1996, they took part in the cup, but failed to qualify for the following season's competition. Participation for the past few seasons has been in the Shield where they have reached the final on two occasions. The most recent being last season when they were beaten 34-21 by Pau in an away French final.



Scotland and Lions player Gregor Townsend

This season is a completely different prospect for Jacques Cauquil's side. The team that qualified for this season's competition having won Pool two of France's Premier division has significantly strengthened. They now possess a squad capable of competing with the best in Europe. Their chances in this year's competition will depend heavily on the form of international fly half Gregor Townsend. At his best a mercurial match winner, the Scotland and Lions player is a more than adequate replacement for Thomas Castaignede. It is the third season of French rugby for Gregor Townsend having previously spent two seasons with 1997 Heineken Cup winners Brive.

Another face familiar to British Rugby fans is Irish lock Jeremy Davidson. The British Lion captain joins Castres-Olympique and will add a powerful presence in the lineout. Also bolstering the forwards is former French captain and powerful scrummager, Raphael Ibanez. The aggressive hooker was injured in the opening match of the season against Biarritz and could be a doubt this afternoon.

Former France international Ugo Mola will add an attacking dimension from full back. Capped 12 times, Ugo turned down a move to Bristol to continue with Castres-Olympique this season. Like most French full backs Ugo will be looking for the counter attack from the back. This is the area where Castres are at their most dangerous as in open play they tend to run the ball from anywhere on the park and Jeremy Davidson will be hoping that the traditionally French play will be able to break even the most resilient of defences.

In a tough pool, The French side will certainly figure strongly. They have already made a 100% start to the French championship season recording victories over Biarritz and Perpignan and should not be underestimated.

Castres Olympique may not be favourites to finish top of Pool four, but they certainly possess the talent and capability to cause a few upsets along the way.

