

THE OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BATH RUGBY • PRICE £2.50

BATH RUGBY

VS LEICESTER TIGERS

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP

TUESDAY 26TH DECEMBER

KICK OFF 2.15^{PM}



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BLACKTHORN





THE teams



 Matt Perry


 Iain Balshaw

 Kevin Maggs

 Mike Tindall

 Rob Thirlby

 Mike Catt

 Gareth Cooper


 Simon Emms

 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

Tim Stimpson 

Geordan Murphy 

Leon Lloyd 

Pat Howard 

Freddie Tuilagi 


Andy Goode

Austin Healey 

Graham Rowntree 

Dorian West 

Darren Garforth 

Martin Johnson (c) 

Ben Kay

Paul Gustard

Neil Back 


Martin Corry 

replacements


 Jon Preston


 Andy Long

 David Barnes

 Tom Voyce

 Shaun Berne

 Andy Lloyd

 Nathan Thomas

(16)

(17)

(18)

(19)

(20)

(21)

(22)

Jamie Hamilton

Winston Stanley 

Derek Jelley

Perry Freshwater

Will Johnson

Richard Cockerill 

Adam Balding

Bath Rugby Man of the Match sponsored by

the Bath Chronicle

Today's officials - REFEREE Ashley Rowden - TOUCH JUDGES Chris White & Bruce Ockendon

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VISITORS Leicester T

OUR VISITORS TODAY NEED FEW INTRODUCTIONS. THE LEICESTER TIGERS ARE THE REIGNING PREMIERSHIP CHAMPIONS AND CURRENTLY SET THE PACE IN THIS SEASON'S ZURICH PREMIERSHIP.

Saracens may well have been stealing the limelight at the beginning of the season, but whilst the London side have become stuck in the winter mud, Dean Richards' Tigers made steady progress up the table and are now firmly established once again as the team to beat.

Despite not being the most attractive side to watch, the Tigers' key this season has been their instinctive will to win whilst by their own admission, playing nowhere near their best. Affected by England's triumphant autumn, Dean Richards' side were depleted by the loss of cornerstone captain Martin Johnson, Neil Back, Dorian West, Martin Corry and Austin Healey. Yet those who have stepped in including promising young lock Ben Kaye, Will Johnson and Andy Goode have continued to ensure that Leicester's winning ways remain intact.

Twice during that critical period the Tigers were behind, seemingly buried approaching injury time against NEC Harlequins and Gloucester, and twice they pulled off remarkable last gasp victories from the jaws of defeat. Not only is it testament to the great team spirit and resolve within the club, but also to their ability of riding their luck.

With his international stars restored to the fold, Richards can concentrate on collecting yet more silverware in a season which

sees the Tigers remaining in contention in all three competitions. Three players who will be instrumental to Leicester's hopes are England internationals Johnson, Back and Healey. Whilst Johnson is the inspirational motivator and captain, Back is the tireless grafter-the player who will put his neck on the line for his club. Behind the scrum, Healey is the magician. A playmaker who is the catalyst behind everything that is good about the Tigers.

Another player who is becoming a firm favourite with the Leicester faithful is Tim Stimpson. Very much the forgotten man of English rugby over the past few seasons, Tim returned to the England fold to play on the wing in the first test against South Africa during the summer. Since his return the full back has looked rejuvenated and has been in fine form with the boot for his club.

In addition to the Welford Road heroes, Leicester have made key signings this season. The arrival of Samoa test centre and former St. Helens Rugby League player Freddie Tuilagi has injected power to the three quarters.

Away from the league, the Tigers are through to the semi finals of the Tetley's Bitter Cup and are in a strong position to progress through to the quarter finals of the Heineken Cup, where they will be hoping to improve on a disappointing showing in last season's competition.

The Tigers charge looks ominous and having not lost in the league at home in over three years who would bet against the East Midlands side making it three in a row come May?

