



VS
NORTHAMPTON
SAINTS



POWERGEN CUP
QUARTER-FINAL

SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2003

KICK-OFF 2.15pm

SPONSORS





TODAY'S TEAMS



	MATT PERRY	(15) FULL BACK	NICK BEAL	
	OLLY BARKLEY	(14) WING	BRUCE REIHANA	
	KEVIN MAGGS	(13) CENTRE	PETER JORGENSEN	
	MIKE TINDALL	(12) CENTRE	JOHN LESLIE	
	SIMON DANIELLI	(11) WING	BEN COHEN	
	MIKE CATT	(10) FLY HALF	PAUL GRAYSON	
	GARETH COOPER	(9) SCRUM HALF	MATT DAWSON	
	DAVE BARNES	(1) PROP	TOM SMITH	
	JONATHAN HUMPHREYS	(2) HOOKER	DAN RICHMOND	
	JOHN MALLET	(3) PROP	MATT STEWART	
	STEVE BORTHWICK	(4) LOCK	MATT LORD	
	DANNY GREWCOCK (C)	(5) LOCK	ROB HUNTER	
	ANDY BEATTIE	(6) FLANKER	ANDREW BLOWERS	
	ADAM VANDER	(7) FLANKER	BUDGE POUNTNEY (C)	
	NATHAN THOMAS	(8) NO.8	MARK CONNORS	
	ANDY WILLIAMS	(16)	STEVE THOMPSON	
	LEE MEARS	(17)	CHRIS BUDGEN	
	SIMON EMMS	(18)	STEVE WILLIAMS	
	ALESSIO GALASSO	(19)	GRANT SEELY	
	TOM VOYCE	(20)	IAN VASS	
	JAMES SCAYSBROOK	(21)	JAMES BROOKS	
	GAVIN THOMAS	(22)	MARK TUCKER	

TODAY'S OFFICIALS
 REFEREE STEVE LANDER
 TOUCH JUDGES STEVE LEYSHON,
 STEVE SAVAGE



CKTHORN.



Northampton Saints



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For one club the final whistle this afternoon will mark the end of the road in the

Powergen Cup this season. Northampton Saints have already survived one scare in the competition and will arrive at the Rec this afternoon determined not to experience the same palpitations in booking a place in the semi-finals.

The Saints were taken all the way to extra time by a resilient Orrell side at Edge Hall Road, prompting coach Wayne Smith to demand more commitment from his side of stars. Shortly afterwards, the Saints were pipped by title contenders Gloucester and then suffered a defeat at home to London Irish. But since then a gutsy victory over French champions Biarritz in the Heineken Cup has shown that the December woes were perhaps a temporary blip from a Saints side full of promise.

Against Biarritz at a packed Franklin's Gardens, the Saints' season marched back to life. In what was undoubtedly the biggest game of the season to date for Smith's side, they produced a performance that was brimming with both commitment and desire.

And so on to today - the Saints will be looking to continue their revival against Bath this afternoon in a competition that they have prospered in over the past couple of seasons. They reached the final at Twickenham last season, only to slip to a super-human London Irish side. It will be a memory that will inspire the side to go all the way in the competition this season.

There are no notable chinks in what is an extremely strong Northampton armour. Competition for places is high, and when you have players like talented former All Black Bruce Reihana playing for the club's second string, you know

that Wayne Smith has a glut of very good players to select from.

The Saints mix a very strong pack with a rapier back line. However, it is their excellent work in the set pieces that is Northampton's real strength. The front row triumvirate of Steve Thompson, Mattie Stewart and Tom Smith is possibly the best in England, whilst Mark Connors, Steve Williams and Rob Hunter will ensure that Northampton secure plenty of lineout ball this afternoon. Behind the scrum there is plenty of gas. Matt Dawson has just returned from injury, and take it as no coincidence that the Saints suffered a slump without the talismanic England international. His sniping runs and big-game experience will ensure that the Saints are able to launch a powerful back line that is brimming with pace.

In the autumn of his career, Nick Beal is playing some of his best rugby, and despite continued rumours of his pending retirement, the full back could well find himself on the plane to Australia in the autumn. Another man who has already secured a place on that flight is Ben Cohen. The prolific winger was a revelation in England's autumn international victories over New Zealand, Australia and South Africa and is a dangerous presence for his club.

Finally, it would not be fair to complete this piece without mentioning Paul Grayson. Once the forgotten man of England rugby, Paul is back to playing his best rugby. A player who is extremely comfortable playing a flat game, Paul has been getting his back line to fire this season with wonderful effect. Despite leaving his kicking boots at home when the Saints played Biarritz a fortnight ago, the marksman will be ready to punish Bath for any indiscretions this afternoon.