



**GEORGE BOND**  
at Allianz Park

**SARACENS**  
38  
Tries: Spencer, Koch, B Wunipola, Hoja, Skelton, Coles; Spencer 3, Luszczewski 2, Price; Spencer.

**GLASGOW**  
19  
Tries: Seymour, Price, Wilson, Coles; Hastings 2.

# HERE WE GO AGAIN

## More pain for Glasgow at hands of Saracens, but Price insists Scots can spring a shock in quarter-final rematch

**G**LASGOW Warriors must be sick of the sight of Saracens. Saturday's defeat was their third to the English champions in a little under two years, each one a crippling blow to European progress.

A 38-13 loss away in 2017 ended their Champions Cup hopes at the quarter-final stage, while defeats at Scotstoun and in north London in this season's campaign leave Glasgow the lowest-ranked side left in the competition.

And by virtue of their 38-19 reverse at Allianz Park on Saturday, they must return to this minefield once again to face the two-time kings of Europe in a quarter-final in March. They will travel to London facing fearsome odds.

First, the bare facts. Saracens have never lost to a Scottish team in European competition — winning all seven contests, including five against the Warriors. They have lost just once in their last 21 European home games, and are the only club to have featured in the

quarter-finals in each of the last eight seasons. Adding to the misery is Glasgow's woeful record on English soil, which now stands at just two victories in 20 trips across the border.

Then, there is a growing injury list to consider. Grant Stewart, Jonny Gray and captain Ryan Wilson all exited with shoulder injuries on Saturday, joining the likes of Fraser Brown, George Turner, Callum Gibbins and the Fagerson brothers on the Glasgow treatment table.

Head coach Dave Rennie will be praying for good fortune over the next two months until they meet their illustrious opponents again. But with 18 players called up to Scotland's Six Nations squad, the threadbare options remaining will be pushed to the limit in the five Pro14 matches scheduled before then.

So, what hope of an upset? The first 20 minutes of this game at least bolstered Glasgow's claims to be among the elite. Although shaky defensively, scores by Tommy Seymour, Ali Price and Wilson made the Warriors the first visiting team to cross three times in the opening quarter against Saracens since February 2016 — a run of 45 matches.

It was at the other end where



**WARRIORS KEPT AT ARM'S LENGTH**  
Saracens' Maro Itoje and Glasgow's Siua Halanukonuka clash as the Scots toil at Allianz Park despite a promising opening in which Price scored (inset)

**CHAMPIONS CUP QUARTER-FINAL DRAW**

**RACING 92 v TOULOUSE**

**LEINSTER v ULSTER**

**EDINBURGH v MUNSTER**

**SARACENS v GLASGOW**  
Ties to be played Mar 29-31

## Jones faces leadership issues due to injuries

By CHRIS FOY

A PUNISHING weekend of European club rugby has left England head coach Eddie Jones with a leadership emergency, after injury scares for Owen Farrell and two key forwards.

A day after Farrell was left out of the Saracens line-up against Glasgow to have surgery on a tendon injury in his thumb, Brad Shields was withdrawn from the

Wasps side to face Leinster and Joe Launchbury suffered a neck injury. Farrell is expected to be out of action for between a week and ten days, according to his club's director of rugby, Mark McCall.

That could mean he is unable to train until two days before Jones is due to name his team for the Six Nations opener against Ireland in Dublin on February 2.

The doubt about the fly-half's availability for the first fixture comes at a time when co-captain Dylan Hartley is still recovering from a knee injury. The veteran Northampton hooker was omitted from the 35-man squad named by Jones last week, amid fears that he may require an operation. Test veteran Chris Robshaw is another who is also stuck on the casualty list.

Jones will have to go into contingency mode. Saracens lock Maro Itoje — a short-term captaincy candidate — insisted others will fill the void. 'I think we're building a leadership density within the squad,' he said. 'We have a group of players who look to lead. Obviously we're going to need to step up, but there will be a few of us. It won't just be on myself, there will be others who do that work.'



**6**  
Saracens are the only side in this season's tournament to have won all of their six pool matches. Their 28-point total to top Pool Three was also the highest across each of the five groups

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	Pts
Saracens	6	6	0	0	4	185	81	28
GLASGOW	6	4	0	2	3	147	119	19
Cardiff Blues	6	2	0	4	2	138	174	10
Lyon	6	0	0	6	0	87	183	0

they struggled, however, with poor tackling and an overwhelmed pack resulting in Saracens running in three tries of their own before half-time.

And despite such a fast start, 19 was as far as Glasgow troubled the scoreboard. Down five points at the break, there was still hope of an unlikely win, which would have seen them play Edinburgh in the last eight.

But having been muzzled by the Saracens' defence, a weary Glasgow wilted in the final 11 minutes, conceding twice and seeing any hope of victory slip away.

Scrum-half Price, a replacement in the 2017 quarter-final, is adamant that they showed enough to give Glasgow confidence ahead of their next match-up in ten weeks' time.

'The intensity we brought for the first 40, 50 shows we can match them and score, which wasn't the case in the quarter-final,' said the 19-times capped Scotland international.

'We were a bit shell-shocked (then) and they just did everything in front of us. Before you know it, we're 30 points down. Today, from the get go, we took the game to them.'

'The intensity we brought from the start was much better, but that's where we need to play for the 80, not 50, 60. Teams like these don't die off.'

'For 50, 60 minutes of that game, we are right in it. Come the end, we seemed to get a bit camped in our own 22, just kicking to them and then running it back. You can't do that. That amount of pressure is always going to tell eventually.'

'These games are always tough — it's not far off Test match intensity. If you get off to the start we did, you're obviously hunting the fourth try. The second half, we weren't as clinical as we would've liked, our kicking wasn't as

accurate. Teams build up some momentum and they're on top of you, they then get the bounce of the ball. You need little moments in the game where that changes, and it didn't quite happen for us in the last 15.'

Ben Spencer, having already put Saracens 3-0 up from the tee, ran in the match's opening try. David Strettle burst through a weak tackle from Adam Hastings before feeding scrum-half Spencer, who galloped in from 15 metres out.

Glasgow hit back within three minutes, Seymour taking advantage of Strettle being down injured to stride in uncontested as he and Stuart Hogg exploited a two-on-one out wide.

After Rob Harley tipped Spencer's box-kick from inside his own 22, the ball fell fortuitously in Price's arms. A shimmy and a burst had him clear of two Saracens defenders, before turning on the jets to evade Liam Williams and dive over the line. The conversion gave Glasgow their first lead.

After Saracens prop Vincent Koch touched down from a strong

catch and drive, Wilson put his team back in front again from close range, the pendulum swinging back and forth at a rapid pace.

The scoring relented for only a further ten minutes, until Saracens took a lead they would hold to the end.

George Kruis barrelled through the Glasgow line and brushed Hogg aside before a heroic Hastings tackle knocked the ball from the England lock's hands as he went to touch down.

The result was a five-metre scrum to Saracens, Hastings deemed to have carried the ball over his own line. A simple pick-and-go by Billy Vunipola saw the No8 crash over to make it 24-19.

It took until the 69th minute for Saracens to secure the victory, Maro Itoje on hand to receive Will Skelton's clever inside ball and run in.

A fifth try for Saracens, scored by Skelton, came long after the 80 minutes were up, and confirmed what Glasgow would have feared most — another daunting trip to Allianz Park in March to face an opponent that has tormented them like no other in recent years.

## We're in last eight on merit, says Rennie

**GLASGOW WARRIORS** head coach Dave Rennie hailed his side's achievement to reach the Heineken Champions Cup knockout rounds for only the second time, despite defeat at Saracens on Saturday. The Warriors were already through by the time they took to the field at the weekend by virtue of Edinburgh's 19-10 win over Montpellier the night before, sending both Scottish clubs through for the first time in the competition's history. Their 19 points from group action leaves them the lowest-ranked team left in the competition, and pits them against Sarries at Allianz Park again for the quarter-finals at the end of March.

With Glasgow having won just two of their 20 Champions Cup matches on English soil, and facing an opponent victorious in all seven meetings with Scottish opposition, the signs are not positive. But after a week in which Glasgow were forced to rely on their capital rivals, even enduring comments from Edinburgh head coach Richard Cockerill that they would be doing their 'little brothers' a favour, Rennie was keen to set the record straight on his

**GEORGE BOND** reports from Allianz Park  
team's performance. 'We got 19 points on our own, that's why we're in the play-offs,' he said. 'There's a lot of people in the capital who want to talk about that (Friday night). 'It's been a tough pool, Lyon are a good side, doing very well in France, obviously Saracens are very strong and Cardiff are a good team, too. 'We always thought somewhere around 19, 20 (points) would do the job, we found out last week maybe 19 wasn't going to be enough.'

'We're very happy to be part of the mix going into the final eight. 'I thought we put out a very good showing for a big chunk of it. In big games there's a lot of key moments, we fell off some tackles that hurt us and we turned over some that hurt us, the lineup didn't function as well as we would have liked. There's things we can tidy up. 'When we're coming back

here (for the quarter-final), we'll be better next time.' Glasgow now face a mass exodus before their Pro14 game against Ospreys on Friday. Eighteen players left to join up with the Scotland Six Nations squad last night, while the injury list is also a concern. Even Rennie himself will be absent at Scotstoun, returning to his native New Zealand for his son's wedding — the date was set when this was still a bye week — means leaving the squad to assistant coach Kenny Murray. He has confidence the remaining options will be enough.

'I still reckon we're going to have a good squad,' Rennie (left) said. 'We've got good depth, we've played a lot without our international boys and played well, so we've got confidence in the group. We'll just get on with it. 'Ospreys are a good side, and a bit like Saracens they'll kick a lot and try to choke us. 'I thought we did some really good stuff today around countering, especially first half, and that's going to be important next week.'



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