

Race ace Chris
has done it again

Athletics on Pages 44&45



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Jockey Nina in the
running for award

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STARTS TODAY

**Denman's
Diary** – page 46



ON MONDAY

**24-page Festival
Special**



Sinbad's
still in my
thoughts
– Ashton

JAMES Simpson-Daniel has been told he is still in the thoughts of England coach Brian Ashton despite being dropped from the squad two days after being called up.

The Gloucester wing returned to Hartpury yesterday to link up with his club teammates after being told he was surplus to requirements for Saturday's Six Nations clash with Scotland at Murrayfield.

Head coach Dean Ryan admitted he was 'bemused' at the treatment of the 25-year-old wing.

Simpson-Daniel had been tipped for at least a place on the bench, but Ashton stuck with teammate Iain Balshaw, himself kept out of the starting line-up by Wasps' Danny Cipriani.

"Of course I'm disappointed not to be in the 22, but at the same time I'm happy to be included in the initial squad," Simpson-Daniel said. "Brian had a long chat with me. I've just got to keep working hard and hopefully I will be involved in future."

Ryan is thankful for Simpson-Daniel's return for the Guinness Premiership tie with London Irish on Saturday. With Ryan Lamb struggling to be fit, Dan Norton has been called back from England under 20s and is likely to join Charlie Sharples on the bench.

Dan Tuohy is set to slot into the second row alongside Will James, with Peter Buxton, Akapusi Qera and Andy Hazell making up the back row.

● THE Barbarians will come to Kingsholm on May 27 (7.45pm) to face Ireland. Tickets, on sale from March 10, can be obtained on 0871 8718781 or by visiting www.gloucester rugby.co.uk.

● GLOUCESTER'S Marco Borolami will line up for Italy in Sunday's Six Nations clash with France. Club colleague Carlos Nieto is on the bench.

Brewer's world blow 'a blessing'

■ **SETBACK:**
James
Brewer
is only a
reserve
for
Valencia

Star can now focus on injury problems



Picture: Not for resale

CHELTHENHAM middle-distance star James Brewer insists missing out on the World Indoor Championships is a blessing in disguise.

The 19-year-old has been named first reserve for the 1500m in Valencia this weekend after a niggling back problem at the UK Championships in February allowed James McIlroy and Michael East to edge past him.

But with the enforced break allowing the Cheltenham and County Harrier to undergo some much-needed treatment, Brewer firmly believes he will go quicker than ever when the outdoor season begins.

Returning to his favoured 800m for the outdoor campaign, he is quietly confident of knocking on the door for Olympic qualification.

"Being a reserve doesn't mean I travel out to Valencia, but it is a way of recognising how close I came to selection," said Brewer, who has been struggling with injury in recent weeks.

"Of course I am disappointed not to be there, as I was running well prior to the UK Championship, but I had a few back problems during the week of the trials and that hindered me.

"It is a blessing in a way as it allows me to have an extra four weeks off before I start working on the outdoor season.

"I have been doing extra physio in order to strengthen the muscle.

"I had a similar problem in the past, so this break should allow me to get it sorted once and for all.

"When I come back in the 800m I expect to see an improvement. I feel fitter aerobically as the 1500m has strengthened my endurance levels and I feel that will come through in my running.



by Peter Orchard

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"My main aim for the coming months is to bring my time down. Last year I wasn't as quick as I could have been, but if I can take a chunk off my time this season I will be in Olympic contention and will have a shot of going.

"I'm not kidding myself and saying I want to challenge at this Olympics, but to get there would be a great experience for four years' time when I will reach my peak."

Despite missing out on a Spanish adventure this weekend, Brewer is determined to look on the bright side following a tough winter campaign that has seen him break the 3.42 minute barrier.

But the Cheltenham teenager is well aware he cannot afford to take his foot off the gas when he returns to action.

"If at the beginning of the season you had told me I would run 3.41 minutes I would have been happy," he added. "But I have high expectations of myself and believe I can achieve those goals.

"There are a lot of people coming through and middle-distance running is very competitive in this country, so it is important to keep improving.

"I have been lucky enough to perform well when it counts, but it needs to continue as there are others ready to step up."

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