

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1961

THIS DIDN'T TELL US VERY MUCH

GLOUCESTER 26 PTS., LYDNEY 3 PTS.

It is too early to comment on Gloucester's form except to say that they ought to have taken command of their opening game at Kingsholm much earlier than they did last Saturday.

Only a few tough assignments will reveal the true form of a team which seemed loth to take the initiative against Lydney in the first half.

The visitors, assisted by some effective work by line-out specialist David Bayliss, and crisp decision-making by scrum-half Brian Kear, looked equal to Gloucester in the first 30 minutes.

Admittedly Gloucester took complete command once they had notched the first points – except for a series of forward clashes, scrum-wise on [the] Gloucester line late in the encounter – but it took the Red and Whites too long to tell the score-book statisticians they were on top.

A telling tactical movement was missing from Gloucester's early play.

Beat Lydney soundly they did, but the victory – judging by the home team's superiority later in the game – should have been evident from the word go.

BOOTH INCISIVE

The most interesting feature of the game was the attacking nature of Mick Booth at scrum-half. He showed himself capable of snap decisions in defence – it is well known his defence work is sound – and into the bargain indicated capacity for attack, particularly when in partnership with wing forward Dick Smith.

In the recent trial he and Smith formed an interesting combination after Booth had collected from a set scrum. Smith had broken, and the two of them headed for the opposing line. It occurred again on Saturday and, although Smith was tackled, it promised well as a gimmick against unsuspecting opposition in the future.

Roy Long, who adjusted himself to the height and weight of his opposite number in the line-outs later in the game, opened the scoring for Gloucester in the 32nd minute with a try which Booth converted. Lydney's Probert replied with a penalty and wing threequarter Bob Timms came back with a try, superbly converted by Russell Hillier.

WELL ON TOP

The first half saw the home team a comfortable seven points ahead.

It may be stated that Gloucester missed Terry Hopson at fly half; but this would be unfair to Pat Hole who took his place. Pat had a sense of responsibility which compensated for a comparative lack of speed and, if he lacked the boot power of his counterpart, Kear, showed himself willing to work for results.

The second half, except for a late rally by the Lydney pack, was the rout complete. The Gloucester pack – Hudson was superb throughout and Tony Davies equally effective in loose play – asserted itself and once or twice the threes appeared to have that essential rhythm; not frequently, mind you, but occasionally.

Perhaps it is early in the season to level such a criticism but Gloucester's fielding of loose balls seemed to leave much to be desired.

UNCERTAIN

Even that prodigious kicker and tackler, full-back Russell Hillier seemed uncertain on occasions.

But let me add, hastily, that Russell's kicking had such strength and accuracy that the ball frequently looked like a scientifically projected rocket.

Brian Hudson deserved his second half try and so did Dick Smith and Peter Ford, the Gloucester wingers, both of whom scored tries, converted by Booth.

Mick Booth brought his personal tally to nine points with a penalty goal in the closing minutes.

This was, however, the least important contribution he made to the game, for he seemed to be in command both in defence and attack, and did much more than a hint that Jerry Mace will have to fight for his place at scrum-half when he returns to the fray later this season.