

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1961

GLO'STER FOUGHT GAMELY, BUT NEATH TOPS

NEATH 12Pts., GLOUCESTER 3Pts.

Imagine Gloucester lined up for inspection: there they stand; all of them fit and full of optimism, yet unable to explain the failure against Neath on Saturday.

Now take out Peter Ford, Russell Hillier and John Bayliss and hold them up as examples to the rest of the team.

Peter Ford for his opportunism and foresight – which are based on close observation and have nothing to do with second sight; Hillier for his calm efficiency at full-back; and Bayliss for using his speed and his loaf among the threes.

TOO FAST

Ford looked for work and – apart from enterprising Tony Davis – that is as much as can be said on the shining credit side of the Gloucester pack. Admittedly, Roy Long and Brinn did well in the line-outs but the light Welsh pack was too fast even for the combination of weight and experience among Gloucester forwards to overcome them.

Our man in the rear, Russell Hillier, performed his clearance kicks with the concentration of an artist and they sped and curled, more often than not, where he intended them to go.

Then there was John Bayliss, always making the best of a bad job in the centre and so often watching his Neath counterparts taking advantage of Gloucester's lack of purpose behind the scrum.

NOT DISCOURAGED

Scrum-half John Spalding must not be discouraged at this early stage in his first-class career but it must be said here and now that Gloucester missed the behind-the-scrum generalship of Mick Booth who seems to exercise not only his own limbs but also an iron discipline among his fellow backs.

Gloucester lost the first half badly. Opportunities too frequent to mention were taken by Neath following half-hearted inaccuracies by Gloucester and the result was a nine-point lead at half time – richly deserved.

The disturbing impression which persists is of a team of youngsters gaily playing ducks and drakes with Gloucester's new-found confidence. That is in the first half, anyway.

SPEEDY NEATH

The second was a deserved draw in which both teams only managed to score three points each.

But judging by the form of the Neath youngsters it is going to be difficult to win at The Gnoll this season. They many have looked like a team of flyweight striplings by comparison to Gloucester, but they turned this to advantage with dodging speed.

In the first half, Glan Davies (winger), Morlans Williams (hooker), and David Owen (outside-half) all score tries in the first half[*sic*] to leave Gloucester 9 points to find.

And though their voyages of discovery may have been more frequent in the second half, the treasures were confined to a single Peter Ford try, and how richly he deserved it !

But this was not before centre, Rhys Williams – given far too much time after a centre scrum 30 yards in front of the Gloucester uprights – dropped an insolently casual goal to make the home team's lead 12 points.

We may criticise the "Red and Whites," but to my mind it was one of those inexplicable occasions when a basically fine team failed to find third – or even second – gear. Spirits were low, I feel. It happens that way sometimes; I wonder what happened[*sic*] to Coventry on Saturday.

ROUGH GOING FOR UNITED

GLOUCESTER UNITED 8 Pts.
ABERCARN NIL

This game brought out the worst in players and spectators. Although the first half was reasonably clean the match gradually developed into a fist and boot battle which resulted in the referee, Mr. D. Nelmes, stopping the game and speaking to both captains.

As for the spectators, one "loud-mouth" and a few of his colleagues who commented on almost every decision, spoilt the game for the rest of the crowd.

Abercarn were, it must be admitted, unlucky to lose as they cracked off to a fine start which must have sent a chill through the Gloucester team.

It was, however, during the last 15 minutes that United excelled and Abercarn lost heart. United's Stevens[*sic*], who scored the first try, played a creditable game, showing that he could defend as well as attack and Crawford displayed his ability to seize the chance, however slight, when he scored the second try, which was converted.

Stan Ingram, not a "regular" United full-back, filled his position well and was largely responsible for the absence of points for Abercarn.