

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1962

TOP-FORM DISPLAY BY GLOUCESTER

SUCH A PITY SO FEW SAW KINGSHOLM "THRILLER"

GLOUCESTER 19 Pts., WASPS NIL

It is pleasant to witness a display which has such quality that one is tempted to over-praise, and is, in fact, worth the trouble of writing about.

In beating Wasps, Gloucester again confirmed that they need tough opposition to inspire top performance.

In 18 games, Wasps have only been beaten six times, whereas in 23 Gloucester have lost 10 and have not this season been remarkable for their consistency.

Bristol, Leicester, Coventry, and now Wasps – four of the big names in English Rugby – have fallen to the "Cherry and Whites" this season.

SPECTACLE

It is a thousand pities that Gloucester do not produce the same enthusiastic football every week as we saw from beginning to end of the thriller at Kingsholm on Saturday.

If they did, they may not win, but they would certainly ensure a good spectacle. For on Saturday it seemed they could not put a foot wrong.

Those vital early points were acquired – when David Gilbert-Smith scored a try which Hillier converted – and from then on except for a short spell in the second half Wasps did not enter Gloucester territory.

Excellent tries, good pushing and fast moving by the well-knit pack, Terry Hopson on the top of his brilliant form at fly-half, and better than usual passing by the threes; all these items put Gloucester well ahead of the opposition.

But the game will possibly be recalled for the amount of stubborn, fast and courageous tackling the home team produced.

ZENITH

It was the sort of tackling which discourages the opposition so completely that it can turn the tide of the game. Here, of course, it was not necessary to turn the tide, but the tackling reached its zenith when Wasps made their late rally in the second half.

Hopson, Ford, Meadows, Osman, Hillier, Stephens, Holder . . . one can recall them all producing tackles worth a round of applause – if there had been anybody at Kingsholm to applaud.

Unfortunately it was the poorest gate of the season and even the officials' seats were conspicuous by their emptiness.

I hope that at least some selectors saw Hopson's dropped goal and try, Russell Hillier's splendid penalty goal and two conversions and Ford's try. All were worth watching.

HARRIED

Worth a loud cheer was Peter Ford's game at wing forward; along with Gilbert-Smith he harried the opposition so much that most of the Wasps' attacks were still-born.

A notable example of this was the first try for which Ford's contribution was a charge-down following a scrum on the try-line. Gilbert-Smith touched it down.

Plainly the visiting wing forwards, Edward and Spiers, tried to take a leaf from their book but found in Mick Booth a slippery scrum-half, capable of avoiding their closest attentions, although they did succeed in making Booth's game look slower on Saturday.

It was a game I am glad I saw, for, apart from those marauding wingers, Hopson was the star turn; and not just because of his speed and kicks and his breaks, but for his tackling, too.

His last try was scored at half speed, as if he could hardly believe in the yawning gap the defence left for him.

Congratulations, Gloucester. Now for the Army !

UNITED'S GREAT NEED

Cardiff Athletic	5pts.
Gloucester United	Nil

If only Gloucester United possessed a goal kicker. Three times in the final ten minutes they missed penalty kicks which would have given them the victory they deserved over Cardiff Athletic at the Arms Park on Saturday.

Gloucester were by far the more forceful combination, with their forwards, particularly Tony Ricketts and Dave Owen, continually giving the Cardiff defence as tough a time as they are likely to experience for the remainder of the season.

Their threes also moved smoothly, but once near the Cardiff 25 they could not penetrate the solid Welsh rearguard.

Cardiff, too, launched several attacks, but they were often thwarted by the polished display of full-back Stan Ingram, whose clever positional play, and safe handling and kicking, was one of the features of the game.

Right-winger Phil Brennan scored a fine try in the corner ten minutes from time which forward Chris Davies converted.

JC