

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1962

PACE, POWER, GUILF – WIZARDS HAVE IT ALL

DEFEAT NO DISGRACE

ABERAVON 24 Pts., GLOUCESTER 6 Pts.

Aberavon really are an astonishingly agile side, possessing not just speed of muscular reaction, both forward and among their lively backs, but also a keen collective intelligence which responds quickly to changes of plan directed by their scrum-half, Tony O'Connor.

When the Welsh threes were out-running their Gloucester counterparts in the frequent open moves the Aberavon pack always seemed to be on hand to add a handling touch or two which made the Gloucester back division look distinctly sparse at times. There rarely seemed to be enough Gloucester backs to deal with the situations which arose and the Cherry and Whites' tackling, though determined, often had a desperate quality.

It was a pity that John Spalding, the youthful Gloucester scrum-half, should not have to bear comparison with O'Connor – a former international – but also have a pair of extremely lively wing forwards to contend with. For Spalding played an admirable game – in the circumstances, and the circumstances were very exceptional. One does not meet a back row as adventurous as Palmer, Perry, and Jones every week.

PROMISING START

Things looked hopeful for Gloucester in the first 20 minutes when they held play convincingly in the Welsh half for most of the time. The pack, heavier-looking than Aberavon's mobile machine, was equal to the occasion and Ken Taylor achieved some valuable hooks against the head in the first half.

But once centre David Thomas had scored a try and that tactical master O'Connor had added another which full-back Coslett converted, the home side began to time the passes and start the moves as only a supremely self-confident side can.

Wing-forward Peter Jones scored another try before the whistle blew for a first half in which only Russell Hillier, with a penalty, had scored for Gloucester.

Lock forward Denys Perry, who scored one of his tries a la Hopwood – taking it from the scrum while O'Connor played decoy – scored two and winger Ken Thomas one try in the second half. Cosslett converted two.

HILLIER AGAIN

Once again it was only Russell Hillier who scored with another penalty for Gloucester. In fact – apart from his scores, which were welcome in a confusingly windy day – Hillier gave the best account for Gloucester despite continual pressure.

Again one has to salute Alan Holder too, for being a trier, who worked hard to deal with the continual threat of a faster and more adept threequarter line; and work hard, too, to bring Gloucester onto the attack. Given half a chance, Holder is a dangerous man.

THEY'RE TOPS

It was fly-half Hopson's touch-finders which were of greater value to Gloucester on Saturday, than his speed, which was not quite so obvious, against a team of speed merchants.

Despite the win-margin, however, Gloucester have no need to feel ashamed of their showing.

If Aberavon are not the greatest club side in the four counties, I should like to know which is !

UNITED CRUSH HEREFORD

GLOUCESTER UNITED ... 17 Pts.
HEREFORD 3 Pts.

Gloucester United certainly rang the changes at Kingsholm on Saturday, when they crushed Hereford after eighty minutes of superb football.

It was, indeed, astounding to see virtually the same team which put up such poor showings against Bristol and Bath a few weeks ago, grind Hereford almost to a standstill with such fine tackling and handling.

The Gloucester threequarter line did an admirable job, with Lowe and Hannaford racing away at every conceivable opportunity, and it was fitting that Hannaford should notch the first points with a touchdown which stemmed from a breakaway on the half-way line.

INGRAM MOVES UP

With so much forward play, United's full-back, Stan Ingram, had comparatively little to do, and on at least one occasion he nipped into the threes to make the extra man, and it paid dividends.

United's tries came from Hannaford, Timms, Hawker (2), and James, with Ingram converting one. Hereford notched three consolation points with the only successful penalty of the afternoon, which was kicked by Ian Harris.