

THE CITIZEN

TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 1962

DEFENCE SAVED GLOUCESTER FROM TROUNCING

GLOUCESTER 5PTS., BIRKENHEAD PARK 9PTS.

First the Gloucester pack began to show signs of wear and tear after a promising start, and then the best half-back combination seen at Kingsholm this season, the brothers J. and L. Harty, played havoc with the home defence.

After reigning supreme in early line-outs and scrums the West Country eight began to give ground under the Park's onslaughts in the set scrums, and fewer line-outs enabled the home backs to fulfil their early promise.

The Harty's were, admittedly, behind a winning eight when they began to dictate the course of the game. But their enterprising variety of ideas must not be underrated.

Both J., at outside half, and L. at scrum-half were capable of greater speed than their Gloucester counterparts, and both kept the game alive with continual rapier thrusts into the wounded Gloucester defence.

BACK TO FORM

But the home backs were not always on the defensive. Indeed, when Gloucester were stung into retaliation, by a splendid dropped goal by J. Harty, there were some excellent displays by Eric Stephens and John Bayliss – well back to form and looking every inch a county centre in the first half.

And Jack Lowe gave a good account of himself at fly-half, always determined to do his best and always reliable so far as the basic Rugby requisites were concerned.

In fact, Roy Long and Dave Owen were securing possession in the line-outs and Mike Nicholls in the sets at this stage; and that meant everything. It enabled John Bayliss to score Gloucester's equalising try which full-back Russell Hillier converted.

POOR FINISHING

But poor finishing, muffed handling, spoilt the many promising moves created for the centres by Lowe. The only piece of really smart home handling – a delight of precision by Peter Ford and Bob Timms (Timms to Ford to Timms) ended with a lineout.

Gloucester were under severe pressure after the interval. The pack was retreating and soon J. Harty had notched another three with a further drop-goal.

GOOD DEFENCE

It was typical of the Park's second half display, and just, that their wing forward R. Wyn Williams should score a try from a half-back pass to complete the points total.

Had it not been for somewhat desperate and only-just watertight home defensive work the visitors could have doubled their score in the second half.

Gloucester disappointed, but the Harty's of the Park did not, in this last Premier Kingsholm attraction – watched by less than 3,000.