

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1962

STEMMED TIDE – BUT COULDN'T TURN IT

BRISTOL 10PTS., GLOUCESTER 3PTS.

More than on any other field of rugby endeavour it is necessary for Gloucester to claim the first points of the match at the Memorial Ground, Bristol.

Thus, unfortunately for a plucky side, they failed to do and they spent the last few minutes of the first half, plus the greater part of the second trying to regain the psychological advantage.

Certainly they won the second half – both from the territorial and the points angle, for Hal Symonds, Gloucester's lock forward was the only scorer after the interval.

And Symonds thoroughly deserved his try, achieved from a line out after Dick Smith and Tony Osman had brought Gloucester to within striking distance.

Holder's failure to convert – his kick struck the upright – was a bitter blow, for the reliable Gloucester full-back again rose to the occasion both in defence and attack.

NEGATIVE GAME

Apart from this score and several bright spots provided by Peter Ford, at wing forward, Gary Mace in the centre, Richard Clutterbuck (particularly in the first half) at fly-half it was a negative sort of game.

If Bristol mounted an attack then the splendid Gloucester tacklers (again mostly in the second half) were always there to prevent its successful conclusion.

Bristol opened the scoring in the 12th minute with a try by opportunist skipper full-back Peter Colston, who seized the advantage of a wrong-footed Gloucester to make an extra man for the already threadbare Gloucester defence.

LOOKED CERTAIN

This opening try, scored when Bristol had nearly forced a score by the corner flag, looked certain from the moment that their lively scrum-half Spratt heaved a pass from a ruck to centre Radford from the Gloucester left wing. Hazell converted.

Twenty minutes later wing forward Len Davies seized on a defensive error by Mick Booth and collecting the ball for which the Gloucester skipper was waiting, dived over the line. Hazell again converted.

To be honest it was not an inspiring game – from anyone's point of view but there are one or two on either side who emerged with credit.

Dave Watt and his second row partner A. Davies were both in fine form, particularly Watt who, report has it, played better on Saturday than for many a day.

ENTRPRISING

Bristol's hooker, John Thorne, too, had a good game in the loose as well as the tight and, with these two advantages the Bristol side robbed Gloucester of much of their thunder.

Of the Gloucester pack the wing forwards Smith and Ford both played enterprisingly and so did Ken Wilson, at prop, who was always intelligent and strong in the mauls.

Much of the fine work done by Gary Mace at centre – and there was quite a lot – was marred either by forward passing (the referee was hot on this point) or indifferent handling.

But both sides were guilty of faulty handling throughout. For some reason, with conditions ideal, it just was not good open football.

One sighed for the form of the Glorious Gloucesters last Tuesday evening.

BOOTH TRICK

However, I did notice one promising trick by Mick Booth – who played a sound game – and that was the pretence at throwing the ball one handed, while in fact it was taken from his outstretched hand by Ford.

This foxed Bristol momentarily and forced one to think that much could be achieved by more frequent employment of this kind of subterfuge !

John Bayliss and Peter Meadows fared the best among the threes and, with no disrespect intended for any back who played, one could not help but think the absent Ron Pitt would have made a big difference – he and Roy Long, a more mobile forward than Brinn. Both Long and Pitt had to withdraw at the last minute.

Although one could not say that this was Gloucester at their best, the Cherry and Whites certainly did well to stem the Bristol flood in the second half.

UNITED TOSSED CHANCES AWAY

GLOUCESTER UNITED 11 PTS.
BRISTOL UNITED 16 PTS.

Gloucester United threw away their chances of winning this match during the first 15 minutes. In this period the Kingsholm crowd saw last season's premier side full back, Russell Hillier, miss two penalties.

And both the kicks were average penalties; angled to the posts at 25-30 yards out.

Yet despite this Gloucester could still have finished with a draw if fly-half Terry Hopson, another ousted first fifteen player, had been allowed to move.

But Bristol's fly-half, Lock, and centres Coles and Thomas, simply kept Hopson taped from kick-off until final whistle.

STEVEN'S TRY

Centre Eric Stephens notched the first try of the afternoon for Gloucester, and although Bristol had equalised by half-time the Kingsholm side were territorially ahead by the interval.

But Bristol flung the ball around far more in the second half and this opening up of the game paid dividends, although Gloucester were never really left in a helpless position and continued their fight right up to the end.

Second half scorers for Gloucester were John Spalding, and Terry Hopson, with Hillier converting once, while Watts, Hollister and Bridgeman added points for Bristol.