

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1962

GLO'STER WERE UP AGAINST IT FROM THE START

NEATH 22PTS., GLOUCESTER 3PTS.

It is, perhaps, just as well that Kingsholm, with the second England Rugby trial, was the focal point of the Rugby scene on Saturday.

Quite naturally, and fortunately as far as Gloucester are concerned, 90 per cent of the local interest must have been at Kingsholm – and very little shown in the humiliation which the Cherry and Whites suffered at the hands of Neath.

Twenty-two points are quite a total to be stacked against the club of Gloucester's standing, but before questions are asked about this embarrassing defeat here are three points which play a major part in the lamentable game.

One: A number of Gloucester players had been working either during the night or on the Saturday morning immediately before the game.

Two: There was not a single committee man who could tear himself away from Kingsholm to travel to Neath with the Gloucester team.

Three: Those players who were not working and travelled to Neath in the morning spent half of the journey standing or crouching, cramped up like sardines in a Christmas-holiday crowded train.

Doubtless these three points had a lot to do with the defeat.

TOOK A TOLL

The players who had worked immediately before the match and then travelled to Wales by car didn't look up to their usual form in even the first five minutes.

No committee man was on hand when there was a confusion over railway tickets – so skipper Mick Booth and Alan Townsend had to sort out the trouble for themselves.

And that long, standing journey took a toll of the rest of the Gloucester players (if not more than the road travellers) so that freshness and verve were virtually non-existent.

All this, plus the fact that the county players were quite justifiably not taking any injury chances, spelt one word – disaster.

DISASTER

And disaster it was. Two unconverted tries in the first half put Neath six points up and Jeremy Taylor replied, almost on half-time, with a beautifully judged penalty which reduced the arrears by one half.

Seconds later another penalty gave him the chance to equalise – but the half-way line was too far away even for him although he made a creditable attempt which, with an extra five yards, would have levelled the scores.

But the second half saw the Gloucester forwards given the absolute run-through and in the later stages David Gilbert-Smith left the field with a cut eye after a collision with a corner post which snapped in two.

Neath's first half tries by Peter Davies and Glen Ball were added to by Rees Thomas, Michael Williams, and a dropped goal by Hodgson while Peter Davies also added another in the second half. Full-back Hodgson converted two of these.

UNITED IN EXCITING GAME

Stratford-on-Avon 14 Pts.
Gloucester United 5 Pts.

This was one of the best games seen at Stratford this season.

The visitors possessed a heavy pack which held the lighter but fitter Stratford tight until half-time when the score was five points each. Each side had scored a try which was converted.

In the second half Stratford were fortunate in being awarded several penalty kicks and scored from two of them.

With a lead of six points the faster Stratford back division made the most of their opportunities, and with Gloucester tiring scored another excellent try by winger Baker, who beat all opposition to touch down a loose ball.