

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1962

CARDIFF HAD THE ADVANTAGE FROM THE START –
IN A MATCH THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PLAYED !

CARDIFF 11Pts., GLOUCESTER NIL

This match was one of the three Saturday Rugby games which were not cancelled, Call all the players heroes for turning out in such arctic conditions and then forget the entire game – for it should never have been played.

Immediately before kick-off I walked right across the Cardiff Arms Park pitch with another sports reporter to see just how hard the ground was, and we both agreed that it would have been far wiser to postpone this fixture.

Admittedly the ground had been well covered with straw, but we found it difficult to find a patch where we could make a real impression in the frozen turf with the heels of our shoes, and all around the perimeter of the ground was a thin layer of frozen snow which was very slippery.

But the officials had said "on" so "on" it was, despite all the possible consequences of playing on such a pitch.

ADVANTAGE

Of course Cardiff started with a distinct advantage. They had played all their Christmas holiday games as scheduled, whereas Gloucester had not played since their match with Neath seven days before.

And Christmas, with all its "good cheer" was still vey much with the Gloucester players who probably, with no discredit to themselves, had not had the opportunity of touching a ball since the Saturday before.

But this was not Gloucester's greatest handicap. The "run-of-the-play" was the worst aspect of this game which the Cherry and White XV had to contend with.

Turning with the ball when play was running against a side proved almost impossible without players losing balance completely, and Cardiff must have found this out during their Christmas games for they used it to their advantage time and time again.

As for the actual game, there were few highlights although at times the Cardiff threequarters gave an extremely creditable display of fast and open Rugby – but minus any classic tackling.

In a nut-shell, it seemed that the Welshmen had got the measure of playing under the frozen conditions whereas Gloucester were like the proverbial goldfish out of the bowl and thus made to look much slower than they actually are.

But one notable Gloucester move is worth mention in this generally mediocre game.

It came comparatively early in the second half when Gloucester hooker Mike Wetson struck the ball back, against the head, and it came cleanly through the scrum to Mick Booth who sold a good dummy to Bob Timms while he smuggled the ball through to stand-off Terry Hopson.

Luck was not with the Cherry and Whites though, for the whole Cardiff pack were on Hopson as soon as they realised that their threes had been foxed.

Cardiff's tries were scored by Roberts and Cenydd Williams, with full-back Priday converting one and kicking a penalty.