

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1963

GLO'STER'S GAME RESISTANCE

SWANSEA 17PTS., GLOUCESTER 6PTS.

Five reserves in the Gloucester XV and two internationals in the Swansea line-up tipped the scales irrevocably in the Welshmen's favour at the St. Helen's ground on Saturday, when Gloucester showed a distinct lack of speed and initiative yet simply refused to close the game up.

Sadly missed by the Cherry and Whites were the five regular First XV players who were on county call at Kingsholm, for there was :

NO Peter Ford to break from the scrum that second or two early and be on the scrum-half's heels.

NO Tug Wilson to prop ideally with hooker Mike Wetson.

NO John Bayliss to add that touch of speed and presence of mind to a three-quarter line so lacking in those two qualities.

NO Brian Hudson to charge down a Swansea forward onslaught.

NO Dick Smith to streak [four, five words unreadable] of the scrum and take the opportunist's try.

But despite these absentees, Gloucester still had the star half-back combination of Mick Booth and Terry Hopson, and Booth certainly did all he could to stop the rot setting in.

When Swansea were six points ahead in the first half he dropped a splendid goal which could have subdued them into thinking that Gloucester were creeping up.

But, unluckily for Gloucester the reverse happened. The dropped goal merely seemed to act as a spur and minutes later Swansea touched down again.

Booth added Gloucester's remaining three points with a penalty in the second half, but even if his kicking was on form I find it necessary to level criticism against his service from the scrum.

His pass to fly half Hopson was infrequently direct to the man or a little in front and, consequently, Hopson was forced to reach out and gather the rather greasy ball.

Yet, I suppose this made little difference for invariably when the ball did get right out there was little any of the Gloucester three-quarters could do to combat the tactics of a counterpart such as Dewi Bebb.

Other prominent Gloucester players in this certainly thrilling if from a local angle, were full back Alan Holder, who did all that could be expected of him, burly Ron Pitt, and Jeremy Taylor, who between them shared most of the three-quarter play, and prop Alan Townsend, who seemed to be the mainstay of the Gloucester pack.

Also, by my tally, Mike Wetson had a fair share of the hooking success, although he featured little in the loose.

Besides having the 'foreign' ground and a superior XV to contend with, Gloucester again met up with the Welsh referee problem, and I clearly saw one knock on, a touch judgement which should have been overruled, and a number of scrummage infringements either go unseen or given the "blind eye" by Cardiff referee Mr. W. H. Heard.