

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 1963

HOLDER CLICKS AGAIN IN FLY-HALF JOB

GLOUCESTER 3PTS.

NORTHAMPTON 6PTS.

Gloucester's skipper, scrum-half Mickie Booth, and his recently acquired partner Alan Holder must both be feeling rather disconsolate over this 'skin-of-the-teeth' victory gained by Northampton at Kingsholm on Saturday, but at the same time very pleased with their reasonably successful half-back combination.

For, all things considered, there could not have been many Kingsholm supporters who honestly expected to see Alan Holder meet with the success which he found in this game.

Even bearing in mind the fact that he played quite regularly at fly-half a number of years ago, it is still no mean transformation for a player to move, in the First XV, from full-back to fly-half almost overnight.

During the first half of Saturday's game Holder showed himself to be a competent fly-half with an accurate kick and a reasonably safe pair of hands, although he did drop a number of passes during the initial stages of the match.

IMPROVED

Also, at first, Holder seemed rather unsure of the distance at which he positioned himself from Booth but once this had been remedied his handling improved and he settled into the position extremely well.

Indeed, it was Holder who gave Tony Osman the opportunity of touching down for Gloucester's only try just after half-time which brought the scores level at 3 pts-3.

On several previous occasions earlier in the afternoon Holder had proved that he possessed an effective side-stepping change of direction which left the Northampton three-quarters looking slightly foolish once or twice and when a cluster of forwards let the ball out midfield Holder gained possession and dodged right around the bunch before kicking across towards the touch line where Tony Osman gathered the ball and touched down for a corner post try.

Russell Hillier, who had been brought in at full back in place of Holder, was wide with the kick but he made amends with a creditable display of fielding and kicking throughout the whole 80 minutes' play.

LATE TRIUMPH

And there, with the scores at 3pts.-3., would have been a fair result on which the game could end but after innumerable penalties Northampton full-back Richard Hosen added three points in the last minutes when he kicked cleanly between the posts.

Thus, Gloucester were sunk by a mere three points although seconds before the final whistle blew winger Peter Meadows had narrowly missed dropping on the ball when it had been dribbled over the Northampton line.

"CAN IMPROVE"

Comment from Gloucester's skipper, scrum-half Mickie Booth on the switching of full-back Alan Holder to fly-half: "Our new half-back partnership certainly came up to my expectation, although it did take a little time to settle down, and with more practice it would probably improve a great deal."