

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 1963

PETER FORD LEADS BATTLE-ROYAL –

AND IT'S THE DOUBLE AT LAST

GLOUCESTER 8PTS., NEWPORT 3PTS.

As the second half of this locally interesting match was a tussle between the back rows, the excitement was derived mainly from thoughts of the outcome.

Could Gloucester put up the double against Newport this season, after trying for so many years ?

To expect this to be a game as great as last October's at Rodney Parade would be asking for too much. So one could excuse Gloucester's desire to do nought else but maintain the 8–3 interval advantage.

There was high promise of good football in the first half. Gloucester lost the advantage after seeing some frighteningly accurate grub-kicks from the Welsh half-back, Bob Prosser, and centre John.

It was one of these by John which led to co-centre Roddy Jones's try. And there were [*c. two column lines unreadable*] given the chance.

PACK AND TOUCH

So Gloucester set about regaining the home ground advantage with the use of the pack and the touch line.

Peter Ford barged over from the end of a line-out and we were back where we started.

And by the time Jeremy Taylor, playing an intelligent and evasive game in the centre, had crossed for Russell Hillier to convert, all the Welsh spirit of adventure seemed to have evaporated.

Ford and his back-row partners, Dave Owen and Dick Smith, were too quick, too keen, too watchful, ever to let half-backs Prosser and Jones open it up.

THE MONUMENT !

Talking of Ford; it is far too easy to accept his consistent performances as part of the [*one, two words unreadable*] scene – as much a monument as the Cathedral.

One knows that wherever the ball is Ford will be. This is as obvious as saying a Rugby ball is oval.

But what one does not expect is that a wing-forward – even of his boundless enthusiasm – should put the younger Welsh threes to shame with his speed in running! This he did more than once on Saturday.

HOPSON'S INSTINCT

For the rest, as I have said, this was an unremarkable match. But it was good to see fly-half Terry Hopson back on form, using his boot intelligently and redirecting play with crafty kicks which showed his rare Rugby instinct.

Booth, too, was back to his old form, a wily thinker who – just for this match, one hopes – the double meant more than open football.

Nobody, least of all me, is going to blame him for that.

A final word, too, about Peter Meadows. As this was essentially a forward match one tends to forget the threes. Meadows, however, had the remedy. He joined the pack(!) and played his lusty best to Gloucester's great advantage.

Full-back Russell Hillier, too, seemed to be playing the reliable football which got him his county cap.

His catching – against the sun – was exemplary and his boot rivalled Hopson's for length and accuracy.

DEPLETED UNITED ROBBED OF WIN

NEWPORT UNITED 3Pts., GLOUCESTER UNITED 3Pts.

Only the loss of two players through injury early in the second half robbed Gloucester United of victory over Newport United at Rodney Parade on Saturday, and prevented a Club "Double" over the redoubtable Usk-Siders.

Gloucester were holding a narrow but well-deserved lead at the interval, and looked well geared up to cruise to a comfortable win. But scarcely had play restarted when first key man Richard Clutterbuck, then utility forward Fred Smith were forced to retire, both with leg injuries !

This was a blow which might have spelled defeat for less determined teams; but Gloucester fought harder than ever, and Newport were fortunate to draw level with a penalty by Webb while their gallant visitors were reduced to 13 men.

Earlier, Clutterbuck had been an inspiration at outside-half and it was his smart move round the blind side of the scrum that put Bob Timms over for Gloucester's try in the corner.

Both Timms and Alf Nield showed to advantage on the wings, while centres Ron Pitt and Jack Lowe were stalwarts in defence.

Nigel Halls, in his debut for Gloucester, started hesitantly, but settled down to hook splendidly, and he was at his best when his side were struggling with their six forwards.

Tony Davis, too, impressed with excellent work in the line-outs.

This was a courageous display by Gloucester United, who overcame their misfortune in fine style and were unlucky to be robbed of success by a penalty goal !

JC