

THE CITIZEN

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 1963

GLO'STER TOO SLICK FOR STROUD: SOUND WIN

GLOUCESTER 19PTS., STROUD 3PTS.

This Gloucester team clicked together so competently at Kingsholm last evening, and had such a resounding victory over Stroud, that I am inclined to think I might see them rise to the occasion admirably at Twickenham tomorrow and force the strong Harlequins side to accept a draw.

Dismiss this as optimistic folly if you like and point out that there is a world of difference between Stroud and Harlequins – I accept that – but Gloucester, with their five reserves, played such a sparkling first half in this game against Stroud that quite frankly anything can be expected of them.

QUICKNESS

Admittedly this is not one of the Gloucester-Stroud games which will go down in the club record books as 'a classic.' Gloucester made the occasional mistake; Stroud made plenty of mistakes; and Gloucester gained their supremacy by using the Stroud errors to their advantage.

This quickness to see the chance and take it, plus the initiative of the majority of the Cherry and White men who know what to do when they had the ball, was Gloucester's formula for success.

As the score implies, the formula worked, and I am confident that if they put it into operation again it will stand them in good stead.

But from the overall picture down to detail, and the incidents which gave Gloucester their 19 pts. and Stroud their three.

MAN OF THE MATCH

Gloucester's fly-half Terry Hopson must have proved to the Gloucester selectors that he is back in form after his apparently temporary drop for, by my tally, he was the man-of-the-match.

Skipper scrum-half Mickie Booth took the ball from the forwards' heels in the fifth minute and after Hopson had taken the accurate pass he hared around the blind side of the scrum to touch down for Gloucester's first three points.

Centre Jeremy Taylor, who, incidentally, must be knocking tremendously hard on the county selectors' door, gave his co-centre Alan Holder the next try when he punted ahead, fly kicked on, and the ball ran over the line for Holder to drop on it.

Then cane Stroud's three points with a dropped goal by Mike Hughes, their fly-half. He found himself well positioned inside the Gloucester 25 and although the wind took the ball it passed just between the uprights.

LEFT IT TOO LATE

Just before half-time Alan Brinn saw his chance when the ball was thrown in from a Stroud line-out right on their own line, and he lunged over for a try which brought the half-time score, including two conversions by Hillier, up to 11-pts.-3.

The second half saw Stroud come into the game far more than they had done during the initial stages, but they had left it far too late despite gallant efforts by John Hogg, who missed a first half penalty, fly-half Hughes, and their captain Bob Simmonds.

Two late tries for Gloucester by Garry White and Terry Hopson, one of which was converted, firmly clinched the issue at 19 pts. to 3.

From this, it might appear that everything went right for Gloucester. That, in fact, is not so. Hooker Ken Taylor came so very near to being out-hooked by Stroud's opposite number, Archie Moore, that if this Gloucester team have a weak spot it is there, in between the prop forwards.

Gloucester: R. Hillier; A. Osman, J. Taylor, A. Holder, P. Meadows; T. Hopson, M. Booth (capt.); J. Fowke, K. Taylor, A. Townsend, A. Brinn, A. Davies, G. White, D. Owen, P. Hawker.

Stroud: I. W. Sheen; W. Workman, S. Moore, G. Phillips, J. Hogg; M. Hughes, R. Simmonds (capt.); M. Tilden, G. O'Connell, C. Whittaker, D. Auchterlonie, M. Smith, A. Murphy, D. Pegler, J. Alford.

Referee: Mr. N. Wyatt (Bristol Society).