

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, APRIL 8, 1963

GLOUCESTER KEPT IT OPEN – AND TRIUMPHED

GLOUCESTER 6PTS., CARDIFF 3PTS.

Gloucester's fortunes against clubs from across the Black Bridge seem to be looking up; first the double against Newport, and now a win over Cardiff.

What was behind Gloucester's win at Kingsholm on Saturday? To my mind it began with reliable home covering, continued with the muddle-headed Welsh backs who seemed unable to think in possession and ended with Gloucester's itching desire to keep the game open.

WELCOME CHANGE

It would have been easy for skipper Mickie Booth to keep it closed, as he did in the recent double clincher with Newport. But he did not. True he used his matchless short kick to give the forwards another go.

But, generally speaking, he used the wind in the second half to assist in high up-and-under kicks, and generally encouraged the backs to do a job of work. A welcome change after that tight championship match last week.

The first half was drawn and this was when the Cardiff team with a stray wind behind them, should have made a move. Hard covering and tackling – Dick Smith, Peter Ford, John Bayliss and Ron Pitt, all put in clearly visible tackling of great merit – prevented any of those faster Cardiff backs breaking through. Then in the second half Booth decided wisely not to take a fairly easy penalty kick because of that breeze.

Criticism was just beginning when he nearly put speedy fly-half Hopson over and twice just failed to find a gap himself from about 15 yards out.

THE DANGER

The value of this move was that it proved to Cardiff the danger of the home pack, which had played with magnificent fire throughout. For the Cherry and Whites "eight" proceeded to keep the play in the Welsh half with great ease.

Ken Taylor at hooker put in great work in the loose mauls and Brian Hudson – and particularly the burly Alan Brinn – buttoned up the line-outs.

Peter Ford opened the scoring in the second half with a try. Then Hopson, running well in this match, sliced a defensive kick which enabled Welsh skipper, D. J. Hayward to put Glyn Williams over for the equaliser.

Then came Alan Holder's splendid run from the half way line, weaving through a close field before he passed to Ford. Coming up at a crushing speed Hudson was unstoppable when he took a pass and made for the line.

His try was unconverted. But it was not a kicker's day.

Although Booth's decision not to take that earlier penalty may not have paid off directly, it kept the fierce home pack on the attack and that's what gave Gloucester the vital first points.