

# THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1963

GLO'STER BEATEN BY THREE POINTS – AND AN UPRIGHT !

NEWPORT 6Pts., GLOUCESTER 3Pts.

Gloucester were narrowly defeated last night by a faster and more imaginative Newport XV in a game which the Cherry and Whites deserved to have drawn, and, in fact, would have drawn had they been given a fair share of luck.

The chance of an honours-even result came just 60 seconds before the final whistle when Gloucester, trailing by three points, were awarded a penalty directly in front of the Newport posts.

And lock-forward Gary White must have been certain that his last kick of the game was going to provide the equalising points when he saw the ball soar straight up from his boot towards the uprights.

## HIT UPRIGHT

But unfortunately for Gloucester, those three vital points were yet to escape them.

As the ball spun towards its target it curled just a few inches to the left, and struck an upright, only to rebound into play. A second or two later time was up and Newport had won . . . but, if it is any consolation, Gloucester had come within inches of forcing them to a draw.

Taking the game in its entirety it was in many ways a disappointing affair for it never lived up to the promise which had been made by the corresponding, thrilling fixture of last season.

The heavy dew which I suppose one must accept with a 7.15 kick-off and a floodlit game cut any brisk handling by the three-quarters down to an absolute minimum and consequently the forwards saw most of the exceptionally slippery ball.

## UNCERTAINTY

It took Gloucester nearly all of the first half to settle into the game and get the measure of their opponents and conditions, and this early uncertainty gave Newport a distinct advantage.

Time and again they forced Gloucester right back into the 25, and it was only wing-forward Peter Ford who seemed able to adopt an "attack is the best defence" policy and try to retaliate with rushes and breaks of his own.

And, during these initial stages, Newport put their turn of speed to their advantage, quite often catching the Gloucester forwards and backs in possession, and in addition when they had the ball themselves were never short of ideas.

After both sides had taken an unsuccessful shot at a penalty goal, Newport's wing-forward Alan Thomas touched down for the first try of the game when he took the ball over from one of their many flank attacks.

Full-back Barrie Edwards hashed the conversion kick, and at half-time Newport changed over with a three-point advantage.

Immediately after the re-start they scored again when their other wing-forward Keith Poole, playing his first game for the Monmouthshire club, scored what looked like a rather dubious try when he took a ball from a line-out in the corner and lunged through to touch down.

Again, Edwards was unsuccessful with the kick but nevertheless Newport were a full six points ahead.

The second half saw Gloucester come right back into the running though, and they remained within the Newport 25 for minutes at a time, only to be denied crossing the line by some exceptional touch finders which sent them walking back towards the half-way line.

And it was during one of these period when Gloucester were taking command that the ball came out of a set scrum near the 25, from scrum-half Mickie Booth to fly-half Terry Hopson who cross kicked for wing-threequarter Bob Smith to touch down.

His try went unconverted, and from then on Gloucester more or less remained in the Newport half until the final whistle.

Finally, a word on what, for my money, was the best move in the whole game.

It came from Gloucester skipper, full-back Alan Holder, who took the ball when Newport were really breaking through and, selling a fantastically convincing dummy, he sped upfield to make nearly 40 yards and put Newport right back to their 25. It was definitely an individual spark of brilliance which did liven the game up a little.

## TEAMS

Newport: B. Edwards; S. Watkins, J. Huzzell, R. Jones, P. Rees; E. Mogford, W. R. Prosser; D. Jones, G. Bevan, N. Johnson, B. Price (capt.), I. Ford, A. Thomas, G. Davidge, K. Poole.

Gloucester: A. Holder (capt.); P. Meadows, J. Taylor, J. Bayliss, R. C. Smith; T. Hopson, M. Booth; J. Fowke, M. Nicholls, A. Townsend, B. Hudson, R. Long, P. Ford, G. White, R. Smith.

Referee: Mr. E. J. Evans (Llanishen).

## UNITED'S SECOND HALF RALLY SAVED GAME

GLOUCESTER UNITED 5PTS., NEWPORT UNITED 5PTS.

A draw was the only fair result to what, after all, was a fumbling, scrappy match. Neither Newport United nor Gloucester United produced anything of class.

In the first half Newport dictated the play. They pinned the home side in their own half, and Gloucester never looked like breaking loose. Only Stephens and Tocknell showed any signs of attack.

Newport opened the scoring after 15 minutes, with a try following a tussle on the Gloucester line; the conversion was made by Smith. This was the only move that looked anything like producing a try.

During this half the only possibilities of United scoring came from penalties, and both Tocknell and Owen were unlucky not to supply points.

But the first half definitely belonged to the visitors, who were quicker on the ball and altogether more constructive.

The second half was a complete reversal, however.

Gloucester got off to a flying start with a brilliant run by Pitt but this was spoiled by lack of support. Nevertheless, Gloucester were combining better than before, and after 20 minutes Pitt hugged the ball over for a try. Tocknell converted.

On the whole the game lacked zest. Both sides were poor in backing up, and chances were missed.

Newport seemed to have the edge at times, but a draw was a reasonable result.

Newport United: Hughes; Mitchell, Leighfield, Earley, Roblin; Whitcombe, John; Prescott, Luxton, Webb, B. Hubbard, Taylor, Webb, R. Harris, Smith.

Gloucester United: Tocknell; Roberts, Pitt, Wright, Ashwin; Stephens, Mace; Fowke, Wetson, Nield, Price, McDougal, Hawker, Owen, Lane.

JC