

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1963

GLO'STER'S TRIUMPH DUE TO REAL TEAM EFFORT

GLOUCESTER 16PTS., BRISTOL 6PTS.

The complete Gloucestershire RFU selection panel was in the front row of the grandstand at Kingsholm on Saturday and, summing up on this truly magnificent win over Bristol, I am tempted to ask: Just how much of a magical effect did the selectors have over the Gloucester XV?

For when comparing this game with the mid-week defeat at the hands of Newport it becomes evident that something or somebody caused a transformation to come over Gloucester on Saturday.

All the match-winning spirit, imagination, speed and Rugby integrity which was so sadly lacking against Newport had returned to the Cherry and Whites – as Bristol found to their cost, for in every department they were completely outclassed.

In the first half Gloucester took absolute command with wing-forwards Peter Ford and Dick Smith the spearheads of a pack which was double quick to pounce on any opposition mistake and often left the Bristol forwards and backs groping and fumbling to make almost panic-stricken clearances to the touch line.

NICHOLLS SUPREME

Hooker Mike Nicholls had an almost absurd amount of success against Bristol's internationally experienced John Thorne, which resulted in that scheming demon of a scrum-half Mickie Booth and his fly-half partner Terry Hopson being given the chance to impress the selectors with a half-back combination which never let the three-quarter line down.

In fact Booth put up a performance which could possibly be rated as one of his best-ever games at Kingsholm.

In the first minutes he saw his chance with a neat catch and shouted for a mark; just before half-time he went down on his haunches to catch the ball after a 30-yard kick for touch from Bristol full-back Peter Colston; and then, in the last ten minutes, sold two splendid dummies as he dodged his way through the Bristol backs, with a splendid 20-yard dash only to be brought down yards from the line.

LESSON FOR BRISTOL

As far as the three-quarters were concerned, winger Peter Meadows and centre Ron Pitt, deputising respectively for the injured Osman and Bayliss, were certainly on a par with their co-threes, Jeremy Taylor and Bob Smith. All four of them gave the Bristol threes, whose handling was at times downright deplorable, something of a lesson in passing.

Giving his usual sterling display, and proving that a full-back is not merely a last line of defence but also a player who can often make all of 30 or 40 yards on his own, was Gloucester's skipper, Alan Holder, while that robust lock-forward Gary White did virtually all that could have been asked of him as far as the place kicking went.

Gloucester opened the scoring with an angled 35 yard penalty kick by White, which was followed by a try by wing three-quarter Bob Smith.

Bristol prop Hazell brought his side into the running again shortly after half time with a penalty.

BAD LUCK

In all fairness, Bristol would, I think, have staged a spirited rally at this stage had they not been forced to re-shuffle their side through injury.

But fly half Terry Hopson and lock-forward Gary White put the issue beyond doubt when they touched down for two more tries, while Bristol's winger, Mike Collins, got through for a final corner-post try in the last few minutes.

Gary White converted two Gloucester tries but prop Hazell was unable to add extra points to Collins' late touch-down for Bristol.

In just a few last words on a great win for the Cherry and Whites. Every one of the fifteen Gloucester players deserves a pat on the back and a resounding cheer for this was a real team effort. Bristol were fairly and squarely beaten by good Rugby, but they might, I feel, have made it closer had they not been caught on the wrong foot during the first half and dogged by a series of injuries in the second.

JC