

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1963

SELECTORS WENT TO SEE BEDFORD'S BACK ROW TRIO

BUT IT WAS FORD WHO CAUGHT THE EYE

BEDFORD 6PTS., GLOUCESTER 14PTS.

England selectors Tom Berry and Mickey Steele-Bodger went to the Goldington-rd. ground on Saturday intending to see the Bedford back row in action – a back row which has, rightly or wrongly, recently earned the reputation of being "the finest in the country."

But as it turned out it was neither the Bedford wing-forwards Rodgers and Coley nor lock-forward Perry who gave the forward display of the afternoon which commanded all the attention.

Instead the man who did catch the eye was the Gloucester blind-side wing-forward, that wily off-side-but-rarely-caught fox of a Peter Ford who, with his experience and tactical play careered through the first half to provide a sparkling one-man display in an otherwise uninteresting and glimmerless initial 40 minutes.

It was Ford who pounced on every loose ball he could get anywhere near; it was Ford who was at the head of the Gloucester pack in the loose; consequently it was Ford who proved the real menace to Bedford.

But apart from the lone wizardry by the Cherry and White wing-forward there was precious little exciting Rugby in the first half.

NOT THEIR FAULT

And it was not wholly the players fault either, for referee Mr John halted the game time and time again to award penalties to either side with monotonous regularity and, truth be known, I'll warrant that neither side really knew half the offences for which they were penalised.

One of the many disappointments of the first half came when Gloucester had broken through into the Bedford half after being back on their heels for quite a time.

The ball came out to the three-quarters and centre Jeremy Taylor had no more than 10 yards to go with two Bedford men converging on him.

Seconds before they met Taylor slipped the ball on out to winger Bob Smith who failed to gather his pass.

At the most crucial stage of all the ball just dropped through his hands.

Though realising how terribly easy it is to be wise after the event I do think that Gloucester would have had three points on the board in this instance if Taylor had not passed on out but dodged through on his own.

Yet at the same time, had he done so and lost the ball, I am sure he would have been accused of being selfish with the ball and wasting good chances.

But even if Smith had made a mistake in the first half, he certainly made amends after half-time.

NOT FOR LONG

Gloucester had crossed over with the score at 6pts.-3, Bedford having scored a try through their centre Drury (who had also later landed a penalty) but the Cherry and Whites did not trail behind for long.

A line-out right in the corner saw the forwards deflect the ball as it was thrown in, and seeing his opportunity Smith reached out, took the ball, and a second later he was over the line.

The conversion kick proved too much for Gary White, but before full time he added a penalty and with little more than a minute to go went over for a try when he took the ball from a rush of Gloucester forwards immediately after a line-out well in side the Bedford 25.

And this time, with perhaps the most difficult conversion kick of the afternoon, he winged the ball right between the uprights to add the final points.

OH SO DISMAL AT KINGSHOLM

Gloucester Utd. 5pts.

Pontypool Utd. 9pts.

Somehow, those wide open spaces that Rugby players crave for eluded the Gloucester United men when they took on Pontypool United at Kingsholm on Saturday.

This is not to say, however, that there were not plenty of gaps; there were.

There was, for example, a yawning gap between the initiation of a move, and the prolonged execution of it.

Regrettably, Pontypool United players seemed to keep getting in the way – although on one notable occasion, burly prop forward Roy Fowke bundled his way past everyone to crash over for a try which Eric Stephens converted.

The only snag was that Pontypool had already notched two unconverted tries, and looked quite capable of scoring some more (they did – in the second half). Pontypool try scorers: Harris, Watkins, and West.

Indeed, one of the most cheering moments of an otherwise dismal afternoon came at the end of the match, when a voice over the loudspeaker announced that the first XV had won away at Bedford !

JC