

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1963

NEWPORT MASTERED IN A GREAT GAME

GLO'STER CAN THANK THEIR MAGNIFICENT PACK

GLOUCESTER 14PTS., NEWPORT 3PTS.

Gloucester's pack, like starving sharks, seized every scrap thrown to them by the generous Newport backs in a truly exciting match of honest Rugby skills on Saturday.

Sporting to the last the visitors threw the ball about hopefully but, in the second half, the home eight had asserted a complete superiority, roving where they wanted and forcing Newport into a state of defence which not even their indefatigable scrum-half Bob Prosser could turn to attack.

Lively though he may have been he was outplayed – in a less spectacular way – by Gloucester's Mickie Booth, whose short kicks round the back of the pack put the home eight in attacking positions on the touch-line.

Admittedly the formidable Newport skipper, B. V. Price, ruled supreme in the line-outs – beating the energetic Alan Brinn about 60 to 40, but it was in the loose that the Gloucester side really made its mark.

With the back row, Dick Smith, Peter Ford and Gary White, all eager marauders the Welsh half-back combination of Dave Watkins and Prosser were buttoned up by the end of the first half.

EARLY REVERSE

Gloucester conceded an early three points to Newport when Watkins dropped a goal. And the home side should have been a clear nine points in the lead from place kicks by the interval.

Unfortunately, both White and Jeremy Taylor were off-form with the boot and the equaliser was scored in the 34th minute by Booth from a central position under the cross bar.

In the second half Ford of Gloucester and that marauding eight really came into their own.

Booth gave Ford the pass from which the wing forward scored his try. But the try was only part of the story.

MOST AMBITIOUS

Despite the title "veteran" which has come his way, I presume, because of 12 years with Gloucester, Ford seemed by far the most active and ambitious forward on the field.

He was forever heading attacks, forever looking for a charge down chance, forever harrying the man in possession.

It was after a series of crippling clashes between the packs on the Newport line – again Ford was the man one noticed, pursuing his basic technique of staying near the ball – that Gloucester really seemed to be saying: "We are going to win this match and nothing will stop us."

Those set scrums and line-outs really showed the home eight to good advantage – mobile, strong, determined.

EXCITING PERIOD

During this exciting period (the whole match was stimulating, by the way) Ford slipped a pass to Booth. The Welsh line was packed solid with defenders and even the nimble Booth couldn't find a gap so he thrust it into the hands of hooker Mike Nicholls.

And the stocky Nicholls, not usually given to sprinting – although always a lively man in the loose – sped for the line and scored the try near the corner flag.

Newport did not give up their handling. Although they were playing now only defensive football, imprisoned in their own half, they still threw it about sportingly.

A brilliant interception during one of these handling moves by Bob Smith showed the folly of the tactics in the closing minutes.

NEAR THE POSTS

Smith burst through the Welsh defence, collected the ball and had only full-back Cheney to beat in his 35-yard run. He did, and scored near enough to the posts for Gary White's conversion kick to be easy – and successful.

It was a fine Rugby match, continually interesting, and fought at a furious pace by both sporting teams to the final minute. The large crowd certainly got its money's worth at Kingsholm last Saturday.

NOT UNITED !

NEWPORT UNITED 32Pts.
GLOUCESTER UNITED NIL

Any Gloucester United players hoping to challenge for first team berths will have to view their chances in the light of Saturday's trouncing by Newport United.

They came up against a Newport United side which picked holes in every department of their game and used them almost at will to their own advantage. The threequarters, particularly centre Ron Pitt and Graham Wright, missed tackle after tackle, and the line generally needs to mark closer and when in possession, more efficiently.

In the set pieces, there was a glimmer of ability in a pack which included three county players. Skipper Peter Hawker attempted to marshal his men into some order, but as the game progressed and points mounted, they too appeared resigned to defeat.

Newport United were the masters throughout, although they only added eight second-half points to emerge 32–0 victors. But this was due more to over confidence than to a tightening of Gloucester United's game.

JC