

# THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1963

GLO'STER LEFT IT VERY LATE

GLOUCESTER 10PTS., OLD BLUES 8PTS.

Gloucester were indeed fortunate to have won this game against Old Blues, for they failed to click into form until the last quarter-of-an-hour, and at one stage it seemed as though they had really sealed their own fate.

Admittedly the Cherry and Whites were fielding at least half a dozen reserves, but this can hardly be taken as an excuse for a slipshod game, as the Gloucester side also included many of the players who have featured in the club's impressive victories earlier this season.

Players like wing three-quarter Tony Osman and Bob Smith, centre Ron Pitt, and forwards Alan Townsend, Alan Brinn, Tony Davies and Dave Owen – all of whom just didn't seem to be able to get into their stride.

From the threequarters it was all too often a display of dropped passes; from the forwards all too often missed opportunities; and from the stand all too often the cry of: "Wake up, Gloucester."

Even skipper Alan Holder lacked the usual lustre in one aspect of his play.

WITH RELUCTANCE

I must confess that it is with a fair measure of reluctance that I fire any criticism at full back Holder, the skipper, who commands a great deal of respect from his players, and who has led Gloucester to so many tremendous victories this season.

Yet on Saturday, though he safely gathered difficult upfield kicks by the Old Blues fly-half Gaine and never missed the opportunity to step into the threequarter line to make the extra man or even begin an attacking movement of his own, his kicking for touch was way below his usual standard.

Frequently he was way off target, the ball falling yards inside the touch line but then maybe it wasn't Holder's touch-kicking day.

And if it was an "off day" for Holder it was certainly an "off day" for the rest of the side.

#### BEGAN SLOWLY

The Cherry and Whites began slowly and excellent covering with real man-to-man marking by the Old Blues stifled their early surges into the opponents' 25.

Eventually though, the break-through had to come, but it was in a distinctly ungainly style that fly-half David Ainge grub-kicked the ball over the line, tripped as he followed it up, and then prop-forward Alan Brinn sank his bulk over the ball.

Ainge converted the try, but Old Blues equalised with a touch-down by wing-threequarter Blades, converted by Ainge[*sic*] before the interval.

And then Old Blues centre Greel added another try, which went unconverted, to give them the lead and at this stage it certainly looked as though a lethargic Gloucester side were content to stay three points down.

#### HIT THE UPRIGHT

Content to have sealed their own fate by their lack of imagination in fact, until the last quarter of an hour when they began to sort themselves

out and wing threequarter Bob Smith touched down for a try which put them on level terms.

Fly-half David Ainge saw the ball veering towards the outside of the uprights with his conversion kick, but as luck would have it the ball struck the post and bounced in between to give Gloucester a narrow two-point victory.

It was a lucky win, after a rather unenterprising game, but one final word to both Gloucester and Old Blues' favour; the play was at least open, with plenty of handling movements, and for once those game-halting touch kicks were kept down to a minimum.

JC