

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1963

NO EXCUSES GLO'STER – BUT MICKIE BOOTH WAS MISSED

GLOUCESTER NIL OXFORD UNIVERSITY 28 Pts.
(5 GOALS, 1 DROP GOAL)

If Oxford needed a boost before they travelled to meet Cambridge at Twickenham they certainly received the gift at Kingsholm on Saturday, where Gloucester – one of the more successful club teams in England this year – handed out a bounteous victory to the visitors.

Obviously part of the defeat must be attributed to the absence of unflappable scrum-half, Mickie Booth, who was nursing a badly bruised rib.

This is not to detract from the performance of Peter Meadows who continued to play his typically courageous best – in spite of a knock which made him limp for much of the match.

Also Alan Brinn was missing from the pack because of 'flu.' Jack Fowke, though, is the customary prop and with Dave Owen in fine form as Brian Hudson's second row partner, the loss was not felt too much.

LAST CHANCE

But they missed Booth. Unflappable he surely is and he would have had to be at his most unperturbed on Saturday against a strong Oxford pack which was obviously told to push, maul and run harder than the legendary Gloucester "eight" because this was their last chance to gain confidence before Twickenham.

Nick Silk, the Oxford skipper, who sat in the stand grimly nursing an injured leg, must have been pleased with the performance.

His opposite number, Alan Holder, leader of Gloucester could hardly have had the same feelings about his own team's performances.

For once the Gloucester strength seemed to suffer a blow early. It was not long before they realised they were playing better and fleetier men.

POLICY OF PLAY

And furthermore they were playing a team who were not going to allow Gloucester to dictate a forward policy of play.

Holder could hardly complain at John Bayliss, a stupendous performer who did all he could to break through.

Bayliss used guile, strength, speed (one fine burst in defence saved an Oxford try) side-step, swerve – everything in the threequarter's book to pull Gloucester out of the mire. All to no avail.

And the Oxford men, ignoring Gloucester's reputation for power-pack techniques, gaily embarked on a threequarter exhibition, the like of which has not been seen at Kingsholm for many a day.

SCORED THREE TRIES

D. K. Jones, a typical Welsh three, – speedy and evasive, wily and sure-footed – scored three tries and lock forward King scored another.

The Oxford full-back, Nilson himself scored a nice try, which he converted along with all the others.

All this three-quarter success followed a relatively poor performance by the Oxford hooker who was outplayed convincingly by Gloucester's Cambridge Blue, Mike Wetson.

But generally the Oxford pack was more mobile than Gloucester's and definitely smarter in the loose and line-outs.

For the record Gloucester drew with Cambridge a little over a week ago. Anyone care to bet on Oxford for victory at Twickenham? I'd say their money was fairly safe !

JC