

# THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1963

GLO'STER MISSED THEIR LINK PLAYERS

GLOUCESTER 3PTS., LLANELLY 9PTS.

It has been said many times when county matches have claimed star players from Gloucester, that the Cherry and Whites were unequalled in rising to the occasion.

Clubs like Coventry have discovered the truth of this. But for some reason Llanelly – themselves, without a third of their best players because of the trial – succeeded in giving the lie to the theory that Gloucester's second stringers are almost equal to the premier players in ability.

I regret I have to say this but there was a lack of spirit in the Gloucester team on Saturday and also in the match against Oxford a week previously.

The team, it would appear, has run into a bad patch. Why ?

Well, for two weeks running they have been light of Mickie Booth and from one point of view I am glad of this.

## COURAGEOUS

I believe that Peter Meadows did a remarkable job as Booth's stand-in against Oxford – considering he'd not played in the position for years. I also think that Micky Griffiths is a courageous and tough player.

What I am pleased about is that Booth's absence tells us such a great deal about his presence! When he's playing there is a smooth, calm link between the backs and the eight.

And this has been going on so long that we had come to expect it. And, in the past, if Booth was not there we could rely on Gary Mace or Johnny Spalding, both talented deputies.

It also helps us to appreciate scrum half play and realise that, more than any other, it is the key position on the field.

But Gloucester need to give Griffiths a great deal more experience before he can measure up to first class requirements a la Mace, Booth or Spalding.

#### AT A STANDSTILL

Gary White scored Gloucester's only try and had a couple of near misses with place kicks which would have levelled the scores.

But Gloucester would not have deserved the draw.

The tardiness in passing out from mauls and line-outs meant that Terry Hopson too often took the ball at a standstill and consequently the faster Welsh threes had plenty of time to fall upon the hurriedly passing Gloucester three-quarters.

The Llanelly backs were more sure of their hands as well as their feet, and often it took three wasted Gloucester tackles to ground a flying Welsh back.

Nevertheless, there were some desperately good performances in the home team.

Mike Wetson hooked well and was, as I say, desperately keen in the loose.

And John Bayliss, in the Gloucester centre, seemed to be trying almost too hard to turn the fortunes the other way.

## CALM, COOL

One of the calmest, coolest and most efficient players on the field was Tony Davis, at lock forward. It was his great dummying run, from a scrum, down the wing which gave Gary White his try.

For Llanelly, Aneurin Williams kicked a couple of good penalties and Cyril Evans scored a try.

It was a dull match of which neither team can be particularly proud. There was a lack of lustre all round which suggested mid-season staleness.

JC