

THE CITIZEN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1963

AINGE STARS AS GLO'STER TRIUMPH IN THE GLOOM

GLOUCESTER 18PTS., OLD MERCHANT TAYLORS NIL

All those so-called wits who taunt radio, television and newspaper sports writers with that tedious old chestnut: "You didn't see the same game as me," will have to bear with me about this one.

With fog thickening every minute I saw only half of the match – the half which was played near the grandstand. The other side of the field was obscured in a grey, wet blanket and I could sympathise with the critic who advised: "Bring it over here, Gloucester."

But for all the disadvantages – hard ground with a thin layer of thawed mud and turf on top added to the general confusion – this was a good enough Boxing Day entertainment.

OMT's seemed to have seen the All Blacks recently for their early rallies had a speed and businesslike appearance and for 25 minutes they held Gloucester well, attacking frequently.

REGULAR CENTRE

Then David Ainge, who must surely become the regular centre for John Bayliss if his form continues, kicked a penalty from an angled 35 yards.

Two minutes later he converted a try by Mike Wetson, which the Gloucester hooker achieved after a loose maul and a handling move started about midfield on the Taylors' 25. So at half-time Gloucester crossed with a comfortable eight points lead.

OVERSHADOWED

Garry White and Alan Brinn both scored tries in the second half and Ainge converted each.

But it was not just his kicking which should take Ainge into the regular centre position. Throughout he was looking for work, moving and side-stepping, swerving and passing well and looked fully experienced enough to take over. He completely overshadowed Gloucester's other threes.

GOOD MATCH

With Terry Hopson on good form and running well for the breaks, Ainge is much more likely to make the grade as a centre than a fly-half – the position he usually fills in the United as Hopson's understudy.

Dave Owen had a good match at lock. He showed us more than once of those nice runs in which he uses the dummy with such effect and the pack, successful in the line-outs, was well led by Alan Townsend.

One OMT's back rivalled Ainge for the honours of the match. He was centre P. A. Kitchin who seems to have a very bright future. A determined player, he ran well and showed a similarly wide range of abilities as Ainge.