

# THE CITIZEN

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1964

BIRKENHEAD PARK NO MATCH FOR CAREFREE GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER 26PTS., BIRKENHEAD PARK 6PTS.

This was Gloucester's eighth successive win, and well deserved at that, for it provided some expert light-weight entertainment of the handling variety, and should send Gloucester self-confident to Aberavon on Saturday.

Fewer than 3,000 spectators saw this match – which was a pity, for, as I say, it provided Gloucester with an opportunity to throw it around in the manner of the Barbarians. The referee, Mr. A. L. Cornish, proved to be one of the most "tolerant" to be seen at Kingsholm for many a day.

I mean no criticism by this; I merely wish to point out that handling rallies of the duration of some of yesterday's are a rarity in modern football – particularly Gloucester football and I am agreeably surprised that so few passes were forward !

For perhaps this is the kind of match the law-makers have in mind for next season.

## GOOD OMEN

It is always a good omen when one sees Alan Holder, the Gloucester captain at full-back, starting handling moves in his own "25." This he did to great effect yesterday, inspiring the three-quarter line into moves which included Dick Smith in their number so often that one wondered if he had changed positions.

Gloucester amassed all but six of their points before the break.

Mickie Booth started it with a cheeky little run from the back of the scrum, round the inside and across the line to land the ball in an easy position for the conversion by Peter Ford.

I was surprised there was nobody quick thinking enough to be up with Booth on his 15 yard run and I should imagine Booth was a little surprised that no Birkenhead Park player thought quick enough to anticipate his move.

### PARTY PIECES

Booth set up the next try near the Birkenhead corner flag. He tried two of his "party pieces." First he ran, as if in possession, away from the back row after a set scrum. This did not work so, when Gloucester were given another scrum ball he extracted it (Nigel Halls' heeling was consistently clean throughout) and made as if to throw it to the centres.

I could not see how, but Ford gained possession and grounded the try. Holder missed the goal points.

Centre Ron Pitt was responsible for the next try. He dribbled with excellent control until he got inside the visitors' 25; then he picked up, sent out a very good pass to Ford outside him and had the satisfaction of watching Bob Smith score the try.

### PRONE BODIES

Terry Hopson then notched a couple of tries. The second was perhaps the best spectacle of the afternoon for the run which Hopson made left a neat pattern of three prone Birkenhead defenders – all of whom had dived just too late to grab the evasive Hopson. He started towards the touchline, beat two men and ended up on a reverse tack as he headed for the posts.

Hopson gave centre Graham Wright the pass which sent him over for the last pre-interval try.

In the second half Gloucester's Dave Owen and Ford completed the home team's scoring, and Birkenhead Park were lucky to have one try handed to them.

Winger A. Godwin caught a short throw in by Gloucester's Ian Laurie and raced over unopposed after a run more than half the length of the field.

Later prop forward T. Crook added another. Birkenhead Park deserved a score for their cheerful undaunted participation in this excellent holiday entertainment.

JC