

THE CITIZEN

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1951

GLO'STER THWART LYDNEY'S ALL-OUT BID FOR DOUBLE WIN

With Lydney stealing the honours in the first half and Gloucester doing much of the pressing in the second, it was perhaps the fairest result that the game at Lydney yesterday should end as a pointless draw.

Crowds thronged the ground expecting to see Lydney achieve the double over their old rivals, but Gloucester – often defending desperately – thwarted the Severnsiders' strong bid.

Because of injuries, Gloucester were forced to field without their England full-back, Bill Hook, and S. Turner, J. Watkins and R. Hodge.

Lydney were practically at full strength, although Jack Gratton was a last minute selection for the left-wing position.

As the hard duel progressed, the ground – on which sand had been spread in parts – cut up badly.

The going was very heavy, but both teams earned praise for the magnificent way they stuck the pace and conditions.

HARD AND EXCITING

In the first minute Lydney swept down the field in a powerful raid and Stan Betterton collared Trevor Halls practically on his own line before he could get rid of the ball. Play was fast, hard and exciting.

Gloucester, if anything, got slightly the better of the set scrums, but in the loose they were matched by the home pack and behind the scrums it was invariably Lydney backs who opened out the game.

There was one glorious interception by Morgans and a pass to David Hughes which ended with the Lydney stand-off crossing the Gloucester line, few of the spectators realising in their excitement that the whistle had gone for a forward pass.

That was destined to be the only time either line was crossed except when Lydney forced minors.

BRILLIANT WINGER

John Taylor, always a source of danger, had little chance to use his speed and cleverness in the first half although his touch finding was excellent.

In the closing minutes of the second half he showed himself to be the outstanding winger on the field, a couple of magnificent runs leaving the Gloucester defence groping.

Gloucester, after playing defensively in the first half, gave Lydney many anxious moments in the second.

Superb touch finding by Halls, clever play by Cartmell, and a vigorous all-out onslaught by their pack, kept them battering away at the Lydney line. Stout defensive work, in which Weston did well, kept them at bay.

CLOSING HIGHLIGHTS

When it seemed that Lydney were bound to give way the home side suddenly sprang into the picture with Stan Betterton and Jack Gratton taking part in a 40-yard burst with the ball at their feet.

Gloucester were forced to defend grimly for George Bird – one of the best players on view – broke through the centre, the ball passing along the backs to Gratton who was summarily bundled into touch.

Taylor's runs, and a fine pick up and clearance by Weston were highlights of the closing minutes.

ROUSING BATTLE

Ground conditions handicapped both sides.

The forwards treated the crowd to a rousing battle and the Lydney backs, who had two good schemers in Bird and Hughes, went full out in efforts to open up the game.

In contrast, Gloucester backs stood close up and generally disappointed the crowd.

Except in the closing stages, when Cartmell showed real initiative, they made very few attempts to pass. In defence they could not be faulted and Halls – like his counterpart Weston – gave one of his best displays.

Lydney might well have won this game on their first half display.