

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 1953

GLOUCESTER TAMED FORMIDABLE SAINTS' PACK

Probably the two strongest club sides in England on present form, Gloucester and Northampton, shared the honours, 6–6, in a tough tussle at Kingsholm.

Northampton's equalising score – an unconverted try – came only a minute or two before the end, when Gloucester seemed all set for a win which would have made them only the fifth side to defeat the powerful Saints this season.

A fatal slip by Gloucester defence allowed Northampton to sweep through into the home 25, and mount an attack by their threequarters, which ended in England centre Jeff Butterfield crossing wide out.

Though there was never a great deal in it, Gloucester were a little unlucky not to finish up winners.

The fine display by their pack had certainly earned victory, but on two or three occasions things went wrong just at a crucial moment.

MET THEIR MATCH

For once, the hefty Saints' pack – who so often have "steamrollered" their way over the opposition – found they had met their match. They started off strongly enough, but as the game progressed they became more and more subdued in the face of their opponents' liveliness and quickness on the ball.

Gloucester skipper Bob Hodge led his forwards in dashing style, while the tactics of John Gwilliam – now back in the Welsh international fifteen – again proved invaluable.

Behind the scrum, however, Gloucester did not operate quite so smoothly as their visitors, and right centre Howard Terrington – playing with damaged fingers – was not his usual self.

But thanks to the Red and Whites' determined display, the formidable Northampton back division – who included three internationals – did not get many chances to show their paces.

A splendid break-through by Michael Baker brought Gloucester their try – scored by Peter Ford.

The other points came from an enterprising drop-goal landed by deputy outside-half Lewis Morgan.

Northampton's first score was a penalty goal, landed by their international skipper Don White.

FORCED TO FIGHT ALL THE WAY

Gloucester United found Berry Hill a tough nut to crack, for though they won handsomely enough 11pts.–3 they were made to fight every inch of the way.

The Forest team were young, but they compensated for any shortcomings with a bustling energy which made their opponents treat them with respect.

Praise in particular must go to the Forest pack.

Against heavier, more experienced, Gloucester scrummagers – with seasoned player Gordon Hudson always taking a leading part – it was expected that before the end of the game they would be pushed practically out of the ground.

It was not to be. The light Berry Hill forwards stuck to their guns and even at the end of a tiring, but cleanly contested game they still showed they had a sting left.

Burford, hooking for United, had the better of matters against S. Adams, and L. Evans and David Jones, the Gloucester half-backs, had plenty to do.

The ball came out repeatedly to Gloucester three-quarters and although they made the mistake of playing too close against fast tackling opposition it was in the back division that the United had their most pronounced superiority.

They would have scored more often against less plucky and forthright opponents.

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