

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1983

BRISTOL BOW TO GLO'STER POWER

BRISTOL 12 Pts., GLOUCESTER 19 Pts.

Gloucester's impressive forward power steamrollered Bristol to defeat and their side to the top of the South-West Merit Table in style.

The club's number one priority this season is to qualify for next year's John Player Cup and this win over the old enemy has taken them a long way towards that goal.

From the moment that Gloucester captain Gordon Sargent bulldozed over for a try just before half-time, there was only one side playing with the drive and determination necessary for victory.

Gloucester's forwards played as a cohesive unit; the John Player Cup champions' pack were a ragged outfit by comparison.

The game saw another remarkable performance from veteran lock forward John Fidler. Young Matthew Skuse, making his Bristol debut, must have learnt a lot about line-out play as Fidler dominated with quality two-handed catching.

This gave scrum-half Steve Baker the controlled, tidy possession he must dream about and enabled Gloucester to keep the pressure on Bristol.

Orwin won most of the ball at the front, but Hesford edged things at the back of the line-outs. This was the only area of Bristol forward success. They were outplayed in the loose and for Hesford, Rafter and Polledri having to take second billing is an indication of how well Gloucester's back row trio played.

They were also able to put the pressure on the Bristol backs thanks to an untidy service from the home forwards and the inexperience of 19-year-old Simon Roberts at outside-half.

On his debut, Roberts lacked confidence in his defensive kicking and his service to his centres was often ponderous.

Twice Paul Taylor was able to line the dangerous Knibbs up in his sights and sink him with thunderous tackles which turned defence into attack.

Bristol had the edge in an error riddled opening and built up a 12-3 lead, but Sargent's try, created by Mike Hamlin and Mills, pulled Gloucester back within striking distance.

Two Tim Smith penalties edged Gloucester ahead and the game was sewn up with a Nick Price try after Bristol full-back Huw Duggan was dispossessed by Derrick Morgan when the ball should have been kicked into the back-row of the stand.

Bristol's support play disintegrated in the second half and Gloucester out-rucked and out-mauled the home forwards.

In the closing moments, Bristol ran the ball in desperation, but as throughout the game, they were given no scope by the Gloucester defence.

Bristol: Try: Duggan; Con.: Knibbs; Pens.: Knibbs (2).

Gloucester: Tries: Sargent, Price; Con.: Smith; Pens.: Smith (3).