

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1983

HOOKERS SENT OFF AS . . .

POOLER'S POWER TELLS

GLOUCESTER 12 Pts., PONTYPOOL 23

Unbeaten Pontypool protected their record at Kingsholm last night with a late burst of points which sunk Gloucester.

Just like the Cardiff match two weeks ago, Gloucester were in contention for much of the game, but bowed to a side who finished powerfully.

But that is where the similarity to that entertaining game ends. Last night's clash was a dour forward battle where violence was never far from the surface.

Both sides had their hookers sent off – Kevin White for Gloucester and Pontypool's Steve Jones – after a torrid opening quarter when there was precious little rugby but plenty of fighting.

It was in the opening stages that the game was decided. Gloucester had the penalty chances to set up an imposing lead, but they went begging and Pontypool adjusted better to their loss in the pack.

GRUELLING

It was a gruelling start to the game and one which international panel referee Tony Trigg let slip away from his control.

Several lectures failed to calm the forward battle and it was inevitable that someone would go before too long.

Gloucester had opened up a 6-0 lead with two Tim Smith penalties, but the Gloucester full-back will not have many happy memories of last night's match.

Gloucester, already hit by the withdrawal of front-row stalwarts Steve Mills and Phil Blakeway, suffered when John Fidler was injured early on. His effectiveness was hampered by a numbness in his arms after a kick in the neck.

Prop Bob Phillips switched to hooker for Gloucester and lock John Orwin, himself not fully fit, stepped in at prop. Pontypool used their props with a back-row forward in at hooker and their scrummaging proved decisive in the win.

Two tries from close in just before half-time and a couple of forward-created tries at the end sealed Gloucester's fate.

In between Gloucester had scored the best try of the game, created by Mike Hamlin and Paul Taylor and scored by Phillips.

CRACK

The feeling was there that if Gloucester could run at Pontypool they would crack, but the supply of possession dried up, as the Pontypool pack turned the screw.

Gloucester's heroes in a game, which was no place for faint-hearts, were Malcolm Preedy and Steve Baker. Preedy was Gloucester's liveliest forward, always in the thick of the action and a vital presence in the loose. All this as well as propping against Graham Price.

Baker played with composure and confidence despite some untidy possession behind an outgunned pack and the overbearing presence of a Pontypool forward or two. His kicking was solid and effective.

Hamlin kicked for position well, but his opportunities to show his attacking paces were strictly limited as were those of Mogg and Taylor.

Orwin, playing with a badly bruised shin, and Gadd did sterling work yet again in the pack.

Gloucester may well look back on this game as one lost through missed opportunities.

Those early penalties probably had a psychological effect and in the second-half Spencer was felled just short of the line after a good blindside run and several other breaks failed through lack of support in the second-half[*sic*].

Gloucester: Try: Phillips; Con: Smith; Pens: Smith (2).

Pontypool: Tries: Perkins, Davies, Stadden, Butler; Cons: Paul, Stadden; Pen: Taylor.

Man of the Match: Malcolm Preedy.

JC