

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1983

GLOUCESTER PIPPED BY LATE RALLY

GLOUCESTER 3 Pts., NEWPORT 7 Pts.

It was the same old story for Gloucester against Welsh opposition as they lost a game, which they might have won, to a late score.

Cardiff, Pontypool and now Newport have all won at Kingsholm by virtue of a powerful finish – something Gloucester were formerly noted for.

To be fair, their much adjusted pack had competed well with the extremely strong Newport eight and in dreadful conditions the side played some reasonable rugby.

A draw would have been a fair result and it would have been so, but for Newport's match clinching try two minutes from the end.

Certainly, Gloucester's performance was far more creditable than their dreadful showing in midweek against Newbridge.

Although in trouble in both scrum and line-out they gave an impressive display in the loose and in scrum-half Steve Baker they had a player who adapted superbly to the demands of the weather conditions.

ENTERPRISING

His astute kicking was excellent and some strong and enterprising running might well have brought better reward on a drier afternoon.

Given the gale-force winds and torrential rain it was not a bad game for the diehards who turned up to watch. The Kingsholm crowd has seen worse matches played in better conditions.

Praise too for referee John Lowry of the Notts., Lincs., and Derby Society, who made allowances for the weather and was quick to control any isolated flash of temper.

Gloucester, facing the wind in the first half, were satisfied with a three points deficit at half-time. Newport had pressed strongly but rarely looked like scoring a try.

PROBLEMS

With the elements, Gloucester found similar problems in breaking down the defence but looked to have earned at least a draw with a Tim Smith penalty 16 minutes from time.

Newport with a strong finish piled on the pressure which was rewarded with a try for hooker Mike Watkins.

Gloucester's effort and commitment could not be faulted although at the moment they are not getting a great deal of luck.

In some of the bigger games this season, they have created the half-chances without turning them into points and this was true again on Saturday.

SUCCESSFUL

As well as Baker, Gloucester's pack hunted successfully in the loose and did not allow much scope for Newport to set up back-row moves – something which Newbridge had exploited on Wednesday.

Wood had a much sharper game at blindside and worked well in concert with Teague and Spencer while centre Mogg was resolute in defence and dangerous with the ball.

Gloucester, after a remarkably tough spell have some respite now, with no mid-week fixture and a short trip to Clifton next Saturday.

Gloucester: Pen.; Smith.

Newport: Try, Watkins; Pen., Phillips.

Man of the Match: Steve Baker. . . an excellent game in difficult circumstances.

JC