

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1983

GLO'STER BACKS SPARKLE

GLOUCESTER 30 Pts., ROSSLYN PARK 10

Gloucester served up some sparkling rugby in the first half to confound their critics and gain ample revenge on Rosslyn Park for a controversial defeat last season.

Unfortunately, they could not sustain their high-class efforts into the second half, but some of the threequarter play in the opening period was the best played by Gloucester for a long time.

Park were left gasping by a dominant Gloucester team who played with zest and confidence and were rewarded with six quality tries.

The Gloucester camp were pleased and satisfied with their afternoon's work but the loss of initiative after half-time, which allowed Park back into the game, certainly concerned captain Gordon Sargent.

Park came to Gloucester with a big and experienced pack, a useful back division and a former international in Marcus Rose at full-back.

BLASTED

But they were blasted away in an exhilarating opening burst which saw Gloucester take a 12-0 lead before Rosslyn Park had won a line-out or a maul.

As always, the foundations for success are laid in the front five and Gloucester's all-international quintet proved the immense value of their experience.

Park had a difficult time in the tight and in the line-outs were submerged by the collective excellence of Fidler, Boyle and Teague. Park's back row tried hard to stem the tide but Gloucester were quicker to the loose and generally more committed.

There was not much wrong with this Gloucester pack – a little lack of pace apart – but it was the backs who certainly grabbed the attention on Saturday.

RAPID

With a rapid service from the promising Wilmott the backs were always moving forward with serious intent and the handling was surprisingly crisp. The Park defence were left floundering by a series of effective miss-moves in the centre and the pace of wingers Price and Morgan caused havoc.

In contrast, Park's attempts to open up were rather restricted to brave runs from deep defence. Rose's rather plodding tactics of joining the line then grub-kicking to the corner were ill-suited to the nature of the game.

Smith's pacy interventions into the Gloucester line were certainly more effective, and he, like Taylor and Hamlin, is looking a better player and seems to have recaptured that vital edge of confidence.

Price limped from the field in the second half with a recurrence of his old hamstring trouble and confirmed after the match that he could be out for several games.

His departure enabled a little room for Park's most dangerous player, right wing Cedric Carr, and his pace and balance showed him as an exciting runner to watch.

ASSURED

This was one of Gloucester's most assured performances of the season although they must sustain their effort throughout the entire game if they are to start picking up the scalps of the top sides.

Gloucester: Tries; Smith, Spencer (2), Price, Gadd, Mills. Cons.: Smith (3).

Rosslyn Park: Tries; Anderson, Montgomery. Con.: Ross.

Man of the Match: Mike Hamlin. A confident display, releasing the backs at every opportunity and making a telling break or two, plus an immaculate display of line-kicking in the second half.

UNITED HOOKER SENT OFF

GLOUCESTER UTD. 18 PTS., CAERLEON 13 PTS.

United hooker Glyn Mann was sent off after only 10 minutes of the game for alleged trampling and this meant that flanker Paul Wood had to switch to hooker.

Despite this, United held their own in the scrums, John Brain and Nigel Scrivens did well in the line-outs while number eight Larry Cummins did some useful work.

Outside-half Paul Webb was in fine form, making several clever breaks and kicking well to the line.

United took the lead after only two minutes with a try by Marcus Hannaford and they increased their lead with a try by Webb. Caerleon hit back with a converted try to make it 8-6.

In the second-half the Welshmen went ahead with a penalty, but United hit back with tries by Bob Phillips and Cummins to steal the match. Webb added one conversion.

Man of the Match: Paul Wood, a lively job in an unaccustomed role.