

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1983

THE BEST IN THE WEST

GLOUCESTER 16 Pts., BATH 8 Pts.

Gloucester are racing certainties to play in the John Player Cup next season after this comfortable South West Merit Table win.

The Cherry and Whites were in fine fettle, worthy winners of a sporting game which, on reflection, was more one-sided than the scoreline suggests.

Bath lived up to their glowing reputation only briefly when they dominated the early play and took the lead with a nicely constructed try.

Then came Gloucester's awakening. Their rousing forwards took Bath to pieces and for all but a brief period late in the second half the visitors were reduced to virtually worthless scraps of possession, mostly tapped ball from the tail of the line-out.

It was all Gloucester. They lived up to the legend of packs of old, playing with inspiration and eagerness to roll Bath back and secure possession almost at will.

It was very much a team performance but one has to pick out Gadd, Teague and Spencer as the tenacious trio who were unwavering in their resolve to put Bath firmly in their place. On Saturday's performance, they would be a lot of spectators' first names on the County team-sheet to play Somerset in the County Championship final.

The Bath lads would certainly not relish another confrontation for they were badly beaten in the loose, and at rucks and mauls Gloucester ruled supreme.

CONTRAST

What a contrast from Wednesday's game against Ebbw Vale, a point which will no doubt concern the selectors who must be in a quandary on how best to satisfy their supporters who demand the best, and the players who, quite obviously, need a rest.

Baker and Hamlin were tidy half-backs and Mogg and Taylor, with much more possession, outshone their opposite numbers and were keen to give opportunities to the wings.

Most chances fell Price's way and he took a perfect pass from Taylor to leave his man on the inside and race over behind the posts for Gloucester's second try.

Bath had taken the lead with a splendid try by John Hall, but Gloucester's response was immediate and decisive.

Spencer raced away from a maul, Hamlin and Taylor continued the move, and Mogg finished things off with an outstanding try.

Smith added a penalty and then converted Price's try to put Gloucester in control 13-4 at the interval.

He then kicked one out of three attempts early in the second half before, briefly, Gloucester lost their concentration and let Bath back into the game with a good try by Trevaskis.

However, the Cherry and Whites finished strongly and were well on top when referee Mr. Wakefield called a halt to a splendid game, which once again establishes Gloucester as the best in the west.