

# THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1983

GLOUCESTER FAIL IN WALES AGAIN

NEWPORT 16 Pts., GLOUCESTER 3 Pts.

The pack that has tamed England's best in recent weeks was itself overwhelmed by a rampant Newport eight at Rodney Parade last night.

Gloucester's forwards fought gamely, particularly the back row, but were powerless to prevent the Welshmen notching up their first 'double' in 11 years.

The most Gloucester could say about their performance was that they did not give up – thus preventing a runaway win which was always threatened.

Newport took charge from an early stage and their supporters left the ground full of glowing praise for the best forward display they had seen this season.

In the scrum hooker Mike Watkins and prop Rhys Morgan celebrated their call up to the Welsh squad by more than matching the Gloucester front row of Preedy, White and Pascall. Without the strength of Blakeway and the skill of Mills, Gloucester's first line of attack was clearly weakened.

The problem filtered back to locks Fidler and Boyle who could establish no real foothold in the line-outs.

Mike Teague and John Gadd both worked hard in the loose, along with Dave Spencer, but the ball simply was not going Gloucester's way. Even occasionally fine touch kicking by Mike Hamlin and particularly Steve Baker failed to make more than momentary headway.

## OFFENCES

Gloucester infringed frequently as they struggled to hold back the constant Newport advances, and every offence was harshly treated by referee Ken Rowlands.

Three times he ordered Gloucester back a further 10 metres for penalties because of dissent.

The only try of the match was scored within minutes of the kick-off. From the first line out, flanker Roger Powell – a dynamic toiler – took the ball at the back and charged 20 yards, handing off two half-hearted tackles, to score.

Full back Phil Parker missed the conversion kick but it was one of only a few failures by the stylish kicker. He went on to land three first half penalties – punishing Gloucester's infringements – with Paul Ford kicking one in reply.

After the interval Newport seemed content with their 13-3 lead and had the forward strength to tie the match up. They penned Gloucester back in their own half but towards the end seemed to be score hungry again when only handling errors by their threequarters foiled their ambitions. The sole additional score was a further Parker penalty.

After this frustrating decline in fortunes, Gloucester will be looking forward to some rather more digestible Christmas fare against Plymouth and Lydney.

Man of the Match: Mike Watkins. The Newport hooker inspired his pack to a rampaging display.