

# THE CITIZEN

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1984

WINTER FOG PROVES A TOUGH TEST FOR SPRING

GLOUCESTER 3 Pts., AUCKLAND 34 Pts. (WE THINK!)

Sixteen forwards and two sets of half-backs thoroughly enjoyed a match which left 4,000 other people in complete bewilderment at Kingsholm last night.

It was a real pea-souper, obscuring most of the play and leaving everyone but the packs and referee Alun Richards confused and perplexed.

But it was a different story in the front-row.

Gloucester's prop Richard Pascall said afterwards that Auckland had been one of the finest teams he had ever played against.

"They were a well-drilled side. Their style would suit us. They were always driving forward and I was surprised they mauled so much ball.

"They never let play break down, and forwards were always in support of the player carrying the ball."

He said Gloucester's forwards had learned a thing or two and would be anxious to carry the lesson into their next game against Nottingham on Friday.

"It's a pity spectators could not see the game, but from a player's point of view, it was invaluable as they had forward play down to a fine art."

Gloucester, we're told, opened the scoring with a penalty by Mike Hamlin, but after that it was all Auckland.

They scored six tries through Rich, Harris, Whetton, Stanley, Cunningham and Kirwan with outside half Grant Fox converting five.

Referee Richards finally called a halt 11 minutes from time, although by then most people had retired to the bars to talk about what they had not seen.

Among them was former England selector Alan Lewis, who said it would take a good side to beat Gloucester by 30 points at Kingsholm.

"What a pity I was unable to see it," he joked.

Auckland manager Ron Dun, the former All Black, said the game had not been such a fiasco.

"They say rugby is a game for players, and tonight that was proved."

Gloucester secretary Terry Tandy said today the club appreciated the spectators' patience.

"There was little we could do about the weather. The players wanted to play and there was no way the match could have been re-arranged as Auckland have a reception in London today and leave for home tomorrow."

Spare a thought too, for Graham Spring, who faced up manfully to the task of keeping everyone informed.

His biggest boob was glimpsing the players walking back to half-way and announcing that half-time had been reached.

As the stand began to empty he was told by a touch-judge, who appeared out of nowhere, that Auckland had, in fact, scored a try, and the players were about to re-start.

A minute later he announced . . . "It is the consensus of opinion [that] it is now half-time."

JC