

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 1984

RICHMOND PROVIDE FOOD FOR THOUGHT

GLOUCESTER 28 Pts., RICHMOND 16 Pts.

The time has come for Gloucester to think long and seriously about how they intend to play rugby in the future.

Against Richmond they fell into the classic trap of never convincingly overpowering in the forward exchanges and falling well short of what is expected of a first class side behind the scrum.

On the face of it this was a handsome win, but the reality was that both sides scored three tries apiece, each of Richmond's achieved from scraps of possession and beautifully engineered while Gloucester's were, with one exception, untidy affairs and the result of pressure rugby rather than constructive inventiveness.

Gloucester have one of the best packs in England and had the tactics been to take Richmond apart by attacking through the back-row they could have done so and won convincingly.

Sadly, their attempts to play a more expansive game largely failed as passes were dropped or went astray.

It must be something of a dilemma for coach Dick Smith who would plainly like to make more use of his backs but could well be faced with some re-building unless the form of the present players improves dramatically.

There were times when Gloucester's pack appeared to be going at half pace, but they were never in trouble and churned back the ball effortlessly.

Fidler ruled the line-outs and Spencer and Teague were never far from the action with Spencer enjoying a particularly lively game.

Some forceful early play by Gloucester's pack set the pattern, and their domination was never ruffled by Richmond's bouts of devastating midfield running inspired by fly-half Humberstone and former England centre Preston who looked as good as any attacker to play at Kingsholm this season.

Hamlin had given Gloucester the lead with a penalty goal before Richmond scored their first try through full-back Andy Hampel.

A second Hamlin penalty was answered by a second Richmond try, this time from Humberstone, but hooker Steve Mills levelled the scores just before time when he stole over from the front of a line-out.

A forceful run by centre Cormack O'Donaghue, standing in for Richard Mogg, saw Spencer pop up for Gloucester's best try converted by Hamlin who added two more penalties to put Gloucester firmly in control.

Richmond brought off another stunning raid with almost all their team handling before centre Dave Guyatt scored, but the last word was with Gloucester.

Richmond tried to run the ball from their own line only for Spencer to intercept and give Taylor a simple try converted by Hamlin.

UNITED PIPPED AT POST

NOTTS. CORSAIRS 16 Pts., GLOUCESTER UTD. 13 Pts.

United gave an uncharacteristic performance after their recent run and were beaten in the last couple of minutes.

They began well with forwards winning good possession and took an early lead with a 45-yard penalty by winger Tim Smith.

But the home side took the lead when a kick was charged down in the United 22 and scored a try.

United regained the lead when they won a ruck for scrum-half Marcus Hammond to cross over. Roy Pinnell then put them further ahead with a penalty.

In the second half Smith kicked a further penalty, but then things began to go wrong.

Notts scored a further try and the game was put beyond United's reach when the home side took advantage of another charged down kick to get their noses in front.

JC