

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 19, 1984

BACK ON THE BOYLE AS ORRELL CRUMBLE

ORRELL 6 Pts., GLOUCESTER 20 Pts.

Under-strength Gloucester got a far less demanding reception than they expected on the windswept Orrell pitch.

The weakened Cherry and Whites were fearing the worst as they journeyed North to meet one of the most successful English teams of the season.

But it quickly became evident that a sad malaise has stricken the proud Lancashire Cup holders. In recent weeks their winning run has come to a sudden halt as they have been beaten in successive games by Wasps, Waterloo and Headingley.

The trend continued as they foundered hopelessly against a Gloucester side short of five regular forwards, including skipper Gordon Sargent who withdrew, belatedly, with flu'.

For a few minutes of the first half it seemed that the strong wind behind them and the inspiring talents of their outside half Peter Williams, a county and England B player, might sustain Orrell.

They took a first minute lead with a 40 yard penalty by winger Steve Burnage.

But a well controlled scrum under the Orrell posts in the ninth minute gave Gloucester a lead they never relinquished. Reserve number eight Larry Cummins – who deputised efficiently and smoothly for the bedridden Mike Teague – peeled from the scrum to slip the ball to Steve Boyle.

The British Lion lock, who bounced pleasingly back to form in this game, crashed through for a try which Mike Hamlin had no difficulty converting.

With the wind at their backs Orrell's sheer determination kept them mainly on the offensive in the first half and Gloucester made few excursions behind their '22'.

But they never looked in trouble holding Orrell in the forward exchanges and apart from a disallowed try when the Northerners were clearly offside, the Gloucester line was stoutly defended.

After the break the pattern changed quickly as Gloucester took up the cudgels and made rapid forward progress.

Despite having an all-reserve front row Gloucester were extremely effective in the scrums. In the line-outs Boyle came into his own with John Brain also performing usefully – although much of Gloucester's superiority here stemmed from the poor service of Orrell's hooker, Dick Fisher.

His throws were rarely accurate enough to give Orrell's England 'B' lock, Dave Cusani, a look in.

Four minutes into the second-half, Boyle took cleanly at a close-range line-out and dived through for a try. Hamlin missed the conversion.

Another four minutes and Gloucester were in a commanding lead. This came when from a line-out in the same position. Cummins took it at the back and crashed over. Once again, Hamlin missed the conversion.

But the outside-half did not falter in the final quarter of the game when a flying long pass from Steve Baker put him through for a try.

Hamlin glided through under the posts with comrades to spare on his right flank if he had need them. He put the finishing touch to the flowing score with the conversion.

Burnage ended the scoring as it had begun, with an Orrell penalty. The Northerners finished strongly but still could not find a way through the solid Gloucester defensive barricades.

Gloucester: Tries; Boyle (2), Cummins, Hamlin. Cons.; Hamlin (2).

Orrell: Pens; Burnage (2).

MAN OF THE MATCH : Steve Boyle . . . back to his best form.

JC