

THE CITIZEN

TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 1984

PAUL TAYLOR . . . CAPTAIN'S INNINGS

I'LL STAND FOR SKIPPER, HE SAYS

GLOUCESTER 42 Pts. BIRKENHEAD PARK 0 Pts.

Centre Paul Taylor revelled in his unaccustomed role as captain as he led Gloucester to a seven try spectacular in the blazing Easter sunshine.

In the absence of Gordon Sargent and Steve Baker, Taylor settled quickly to the task of marshalling Gloucester's unquestioned superiority.

And after doing just that in emphatic style, he admitted his outing as skipper had given him a taste for the responsibilities of leadership.

He confirmed he would be willing to stand as a candidate for the captaincy next season when players meet on May 2 to choose their next leader.

Against the underdog Merseysiders, Taylor led by example – running the ball even from his own line and creating the last try of the first half before scoring the opening try of the second period.

All but one were scored by the backs and although there was still plenty to improve on behind the scrum, it was pleasing to see so much initiative.

Birkenhead Park, although clearly outclassed, were accomplished spoilers and staved off several other Gloucester attacks.

But with Gloucester's front five providing a steady platform for a flow of possession and the back row in rampant mood, a big score was always likely.

But it was some time before it got underway.

Full-back Tim Smith kicked penalties in the second and 12th minutes and then, after a quarter of an hour, wing Jim Breeze finished off a great driving run that began at half-way.

Smith had made the break, joining the line after a scrum and he then converted Breeze's try.

Twelve minutes later, Gloucester shoved the Park back over their line in a scrum and Spencer dived crisply to score with Smith again converting.

The full-back crossed just before half-time after a break by Taylor and a linking pass by Breeze. This time Smith failed with the kick – so Gloucester were 22-nil up at the break.

At the restart, an awkward back-pass by Breeze was well picked up by Taylor, who weaved his way through from the '22' to score. Smith missed the conversion.

Soon afterwards, Taylor seemed about to try a drop goal in front of the Park posts, but then changed his mind and forced his way almost to the line with four defenders on him.

Steve Parsloe picked up to get the try and then also converted it.

A good run by Clive Dyke gave Tim Smith the space for his second try in the 57th minute. Parsloe missed the conversion.

A punch-up marred the final quarter and Dave Spencer was lectured by Cornish referee David Head, who then awarded Park only their second penalty of the match.

But Park – who chose to run both their penalty awards – gained nothing from it and Rob Wilmott completed the rout for Gloucester with their seventh try.

It came when Ian Smith charged away from a scrum and passed to Wilmott near the line. Parsloe converted.

JC