

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 1984

DEVASTATED !

GLO'STER'S 11 TRY FINALE

GLOUCESTER 58 Pts., EXETER 9 Pts.

What a devastating finish to Gloucester's season! Seven tries against Birkenhead Park on Easter Monday looked good enough, but this 11-try fiesta against Exeter was a joy to watch.

So confident were the Cherry and Whites in their mastery of the Devon team that they had the cheek in the second half to switch big Steve Boyle from lock to centre. Paul Taylor took his place in the second row.

And Boyle, not noted for kicking prowess, was also given a chance to put points on the board with his boot. Not surprisingly, his conversion went astray but no-one really cared.

Yet even from this crushing finale to a season of mixed fortunes, there were negative features.

At first, it seemed Gloucester were destined for a fumbling and highly forgettable final game. In the first 20 minutes, despite plenty of possession from a dominant pack, they got nowhere and a low scoring 80 minutes of boredom looked likely.

Then, at last, the tries began with Derek Morgan scoring the first of four to round off his first season with the Cherry and Whites in pleasing style.

Handling and passing among the backs still left much to be desired as the try tally reached four by half-time following scores from Dave Spencer, Tim Smith and Paul Taylor. Smith converted all but his own score.

But after the interval, as Exeter were overwhelmed up front, the quality of Gloucester's back play improved and even exceeded their run-around against Birkenhead Park at the start of the week.

The pick of the backs was full-back Tim Smith, who joined the line to telling effect while centre Paul Taylor was again brimming with confidence as his forceful running earned him two tries.

Scrum-half Marcus Hannaford showed the sort of initiative which could easily win him regular selection next season if he continues to catch the eye of new coach Bob Redwood during the summer training sessions.

At outside-half Steve Parsloe was sure and steady and seemed to enjoy his partnership with Hannaford. He also proved a useful kicker, putting over four of his six conversion shots in the second half.

The half began with Morgan's second try after a break by Mogg and then Taylor forced his way through a cluster of close-knit black shirts.

It was notable that, apart from one missed attempt by Smith in the sixth minute, Gloucester chose to run all their penalties and it was from one of these that Richard Pascall charged over for a try.

In the final quarter Exeter got their consolation when an awkward bounce left Andy Hopgood clear to charge through. Malcolm Collins, who earlier landed a penalty, added the conversion.

But in the last 12 minutes Gloucester ran in four more tries from Ian Smith, Nick Price, and then Morgan, who got the last two.

With the backs scoring eight of the tries, Gloucester sailed past 1,000 points for the season in a week when they scored exactly 100 of them and raised hopes that next season will go on in the same ebullient style.

Gloucester : Tries; Morgan (4), Taylor (2), T. Smith, I. Smith, Spencer, Pascall, Price. Cons; T. Smith (3), Parsloe (4).

Exeter : Try; Hopgood. Con; Collins. Pen; Collins.

MAN OF THE MATCH : Tim Smith, for a consummate attacking display.

JC