

THE CITIZEN

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ERRORS LEAVE RYAN SEEING RED AT REC.

Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan blamed a litany of costly mistakes that once again made it a blue-letter day for Bath at the Recreation Ground on Saturday.

The Kingsholm coaches admitted that a stream of cheap errors and poor discipline had made it another distinctly uncomfortable afternoon against their west country neighbours, who were well worth their 29-14 victory and four Premiership points.

It cost Gloucester their perfect start to the season, as they were outscored two tries to one, while Olly Barkley kicked 19 points.

"What is it about this place?" said Melville. "I just don't know."

Ryan offered some sort of cold-eyed explanation – instead of ringing his hands in the stands, he would rather have been ringing necks on the field.

"We were poor in a lot of areas and the pressure they created only made it worse for us," he said.

"Our discipline was poor and we gave away some cheap penalties.

"We are a far better side than we showed out there and we have to learn because there is so much we could have taken out of that game.

"Our first 20 minutes were not good. We gave them too much and that makes it very frustrating as coaches.

"We didn't handle anything very well and then did not make much happen ourselves.

"We gave nine points away from penalties and then conceded a silly try. If you cut those mistakes out, we are still in the game.

"We would have been right in the contest without playing well but those are the fine lines you deal with and we have to learn quickly.

"Now we have to be hard enough on ourselves to realise we made too many mistakes and you cannot afford that in the Premiership."

Gloucester were level at 6-6 thanks to two Henry Paul penalties.

But then Jon Goodridge and Duncan McRae failed to gather a Barkley up-and-under and Mike Tindall pounced to score after half an hour.

Bath also dominated the forward exchanges, monopolising the line-out and winning the breakdown collisions which meant Gloucester were always on the back foot and struggling for a platform into the contest.

Barkley chipped away with three more penalties and when Tindall cut a beautiful line from a line-out back past McRae and Marcel Garvey, Bath led 29-9 with a quarter of the game to play.

Gloucester's only salvation was a try for Goodridge, who ran through to collect McRae's grubber-kick with 13 minutes remaining but it was too late to stage a comeback.

"I thought Gloucester were fairly strong in the scrum but at the breakdown and line-out we dominated," said Bath coach John Connolly.

"We managed to create some sort of continuity which allowed us to build pressure and that is where the points came from.

"I think the best we have played is away at Northampton but this should give us a good deal of confidence."

And of Andy Beattie's role who led Bath's pack with an outstanding performance, Connolly added: "In my experience of international players, he would have to be pretty close to the frame, if for no other reason that he fills two spots.

"He can play off the bench and also in the second row. I think he is a pretty good player."

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