

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2000

HEARTBREAK FOR GLOUCESTER AGAIN

CHERRY AND WHITES FALL TO ANOTHER ONE-POINT DEFEAT
AT HOME

GLOUCESTER 21 BATH 22

GLOUCESTER

| | |
|--------------|----|
| T. Fanolua | 15 |
| D. Lougheed | 14 |
| J. Ewens | 13 |
| C. Yates | 12 |
| F. Schisano | 11 |
| B. Hayward | 10 |
| A. Gomarsall | 9 |
| O. Azam | 1 |
| C. Fortey | 2 |
| A. Powles | 3 |
| R. Fidler | 4 |
| I. Jones | 5 |
| J. Boer | 6 |
| K. Jones | 7 |
| J. Paramore | 8 |

Subs: I. Sanders,
C. Catling, A. Hazell,
S. Ojomoh, S. Sanchez,
S. Simon, M. Cornwell.

BATH

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|-------------------|
| M. Perry |
| R. Thirlby |
| K. Maggs |
| M. Tindall |
| M. Adebayo |
| M. Catt |
| J. Preston |
| D. Barnes |
| M. Regan |
| J. Mallett |
| M. Haag |
| S. Borthwick |
| A. Gardiner |
| B. Clarke (capt.) |
| N. Thomas |

Subs: G. Cooper, A. Long,
C. Horsman, I. Balshaw,
J. Guscott, G. Thomas,
D. Lyle.

REFEREE: B. Campsall (Yorkshire)

STAR MAN: Rob Fidler

Gloucester kicked their chances of beating Bath away at Kingsholm after missing seven kicks at goal to slide to a one point defeat.

Byron Hayward was off target with four attempts and Andy Gomarsall with three, to leave coach Philippe Saint-Andre counting the cost of Gloucester's second home defeat.

Gloucester scored tries through Gomarsall and Byron Hayward, but although they won the match, the Cherry and Whites lost the game by the smallest of margins.[sic]

Kingsholm crackled with anticipation and with the pre-match tug-of-war victory safely won, Gloucester set about the real challenge of beating Bath.

They made a rousing start, a smoke filled battlefield allowed Gloucester to dictate early matters with a powerful forward-dominated drive.

Andy Gomarsall, on his home debut, roared around the fringes as Frank Schisano, Jake Boer and Kingsley Jones all burrowed forward.

But Bath's defence held initially firm and coach Philippe Saint-Andre was soon vaulting down the Kingsholm steps.

Gloucester had been handed [the] perfect opportunity to take the lead with an early penalty for off-side, but he attempted to run and the chance was gone.

Undeterred, Gloucester won a second penalty, Gomarsall ran but Boer knocked on, again giving up the chance for three points.

Ironically, the hardest penalty, Byron Hayward attempted to kick and put it wide. You cannot afford to be so wasteful with attempts at goal against a side of Bath's ability, and after 10 minutes, their class shone through.

Gloucester turned over the ball in contact and Mike Catt straightened a beautifully executed run through Gloucester's midfield, chipped over Terry Fanolua and seemed certain to score, but Dave Loughed got back to save the day for Gloucester.

However, from the five metre scrum Jon Preston fed Mike Catt, who dummied to Matt Perry and he sent Rob Thirlby in at the corner.

For all the play, Gloucester found themselves down, but Hayward responded with his only penalty of the half after Catt was penalised for off-side.

But Gloucester's difficulty started to surface in the set piece. Bath wheeled the scrum so successfully they collected possession three times when Gloucester could not hold it and from the first, Preston kicked a penalty after Olivier Azam collapsed the scrum.

However, in a fierce and unrelenting forward battle, Gloucester just about held sway and dominated the rest of the period.

But Hayward's accuracy with the boot deserted him and he missed four kicks at goal. He was replaced by Gomarsall and he immediately kicked a penalty as Bath went in two points ahead at the break, but it should have been Gloucester who had the stranglehold on the game and were well in front.

HALF-TIME :
GLOUCESTER 6
BATH 8

Gloucester's difficulty in the front row of the scrummage reared its head again just two minutes into the restart.

The problem was the reorganisation in the pack and Azam was penalised for pulling down the scrum and Preston stretched Bath's advantage to 11-6.

But rarely can Gloucester have been so on top in virtually every other area against Bath. They swamped them with their amount of possession but it was never converted into an advantage.

It was the profligacy of their goalkicking that eventually proved the difference between the sides.

However, they regrouped and drove at the heart of the Bath defence. Azam slipped inside supported by Fortey and Gloucester recycled to the left.

Fanolua fed Joe Ewens and Chris Yates barged towards the line. The momentum seemed to have stopped but Gomarsall dived over to score.

What followed was an electric part of the game with Gloucester once again on top.

Hayward, switching play to the left, arched infield on a superb run and found Fanolua breaking. He linked with Schisano, but Gloucester lost the ball in contact.

Gloucester were brimming with passion, but it was Bath who supplied the sophistication with a Preston penalty, before Gomarsall failed to tie the scores with yet another missed kick.

But it was the scrum-half who broke forward again and linked with Ewens and Yates before Schisano was brought down just short.

But with the pace reaching frantic levels, Kingsholm erupted when Gomarsall levelled the scores at 14-14 with a rare penalty success.

Victory was now on the cards, but immediately Bath swarmed back and capitalised on a defensive mistake to score the game's decisive try.

Catt aimed his kick deep and Iain Balshaw capitalised on a mistake by Fanolua and Dave Loughed to score.

Preston then added a penalty but Bath were unable to seal the match and the Cherry and Whites lost by the smallest of margins.

Gloucester put together a good move sweeping to the right, and that allowed Hayward to dummy and plunge under the posts to score.

The conversion was added, but it was too late for Gloucester who lost their second home game in a row by just a single point, but this one was harder to take.

JC