

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2000

GLOUCESTER CANTER TO KINGSHOLM VICTORY IN HEINEKEN CUP

ROMA LEFT REELING AFTER BEIM'S BLITZ

GLOUCESTER 52 ROMA 12

Midway through an infuriatingly patchy first period, Kingsley Jones arrived at a line-out and shouted 'let's get it right.'

In those four words he had summed up Gloucester's spluttering opening in which they were at best mediocre.

It was a strange and distinctly quiet opening – to match the sparse Kingsholm crowd.

You could not help thinking they were waiting for it to come alive on both counts.

Gloucester were ordinary in a first period in which they failed to ignite as they had done against Llanelli.

A week before, they had been as tight as a drum. Clear eyed, utterly professional, dedicated and ruthless.

But here, they looked a mere imitation of a side with serious Heineken Cup ambitions in mind.

It was not until after the interval that the real Gloucester emerged with a scything cutting edge provided by Tom Beim, who scored a tournament record five tries to cut Roma to pieces.

If Gloucester had played with the same unerring resolution as they had done at Stradey Park, the Italian champions would have faced an even bigger hiding.

But scoring a half century of points against anybody in the European Cup cannot be knocked and Gloucester showed what they could do when play was switched wide.

For all Roma's hearty application, they never really looked like threatening Gloucester's try-line.

There was never a better chance for coach Philippe Saint-Andre to rest Test trio Ian Jones, Andy Gomarsall and Junior Paramore.

But the stabilising quality encapsulated in the brain of Ian Jones was a vital missing component amongst the forwards.

As long as Gloucester's line-out continued to malfunction as it did in a shabby first period, Roma were still in the game.

The basics, cemented so tightly a week before, failed to function with the same steadiness.

The problem was so infuriating that it prompted John Brain to prowl up the touchline searching for answers.

Gloucester's answer, however, lay out wide. Roma were preoccupied with the menacing Chris Yates and Beim took full advantage of the space afforded to him in 38 flying second-half minutes.

Jason Little, wary of playing at stand-off in place of injured duo Simon Mannix and Byron Hayward, showed what a fluid footballer he is with a measured and diligent display.

He chose to run the ball from everywhere, kicking away possession just once – in the third minute of first-half stoppage time.

Terry Fanolua had a memorable afternoon and is giving Saint-Andre something of a quandary. Such is Fanolua's ability that he must find him a place in the team.

If his stinging counter breaks and thundering tackling were not enough, he managed three conversions – two magnificent efforts from the left touchline – and he even saluted the Shed.

Three penalties from the returning Elton Moncrieff had not given Gloucester the lead they would have hoped for after Andrea Scannavacca had dropped a goal and landed a penalty.

His drop-goal indicated Roma's lack of confidence in penetrating Gloucester's defence, and after 23 minutes Gloucester scored their first try.

Chris Catling chased his own high kick and robbed Roma of possession with a cheeky steal.

Moncrieff sent Little away before his pass was held by Beim and Fanolua sent Franck Schisano in from the 22 on a scorching run.

The try should have settled Gloucester but it took some excellent defence from Steve Ojomoh, Phil Vickery and Kingsley Jones to keep Roma at bay, and when Schisano hacked a loose ball away the Italians never threatened again.

They should have scored and they knew it. You could see their hopes drain away.

Gloucester, careful not to step on the broken china hurled around by Saint-Andre at the break, were a different side in the second period.

An early penalty resulted in Beim's first try. Jones made a crunching tackle in centre field to quell a Roma attack before Moncrieff and Little's sleight of hand sent Fanolua away and he put Beim in from the 22 after stepping away from Scannavacca's tackle.

The impetus had crucially been added and nine minutes later, Gloucester were home.

The freshly introduced Andy Hazell and Ojomoh burrowed hard as Gloucester won possession for Beim to break away from Carlo Caione to score.

Beim completed his hat-trick with 20 minutes remaining, taking Andy Gomarsall's splendid inside flip pass to cross the line.

Gloucester did not kick away possession and there was always the chance they would add to their tally.

Yates punched large holes in the Roma defence and Fanolua inevitably allowed Beim to burst away from Jason Keyter on the 22 for his fourth.

Then, in the first minute of stoppage time, he intercepted a pass inside his own 22 before bursting away to score from 85 metres to the delight of the Kingsholm crowd.

And Fanolua had still not finished. He landed a conversion and all three of his kicks in Moncrieff's absence.

GLOUCESTER: C. Catling; F. Schisano, T. Fanolua, C. Yates, T. Beim; J. Little (R. Greenslade-Jones 73), E. Moncrieff (A. Gomarsall 61); A. Powles, O. Azam (S. Sanchez 65), P. Vickery (N. Cox 69), R. Fidler (M. Cornwell 47), A. Eustace (E. Pearce 69), J. Boer (A. Hazell 47), K. Jones, S. Ojomoh.

ROMA: A. De Anglesis; J. Keyter, G. Raineri, N. Zisti, F. Foselli; A. Scannavacca, G. Mazzi; A. Lo Cicero, A. Murrazzani (G. de Carli 44), R. Martinez (A. Castellani 70), P. Farner, L. Gross, S. Virgilo, C. Caione (c) (L. di Luia 70), N. Martin (A. Bencetti 55).

REFEREE: P. Adams (Wales).

ATTENDANCE: 4,926

STAR-MEN: Terry Fanolua and Tom Beim (Gloucester).

JC