

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1954

INJURY TO BURFORD UPSET RED AND WHITES

HOME THREES HAD THRUST

How far the injury to Mervyn Burford deprived Gloucester of a very reasonable chance of getting the better of Coventry at Coundon-rd. is a topic which will cause considerable argument.

Playing with only 14 men for the greater part of the game, Gloucester so extended the Midlanders that with less than 10 minutes to go – and the visitors only one point behind – a Gloucester win was still a distinct possibility.

But then the powerful Coventry back division was to some extent able to shake off the grip of the gallant 14.

Coventry gained another try, which was converted, and the game ended in victory for the Midlanders by 14 points to 8.

The difference between the scores was represented by two penalty goals which gave Coventry a six points lead little more than 10 minutes from the start. Apart from this, the scoring was a goal and a try by each side.

SPEEDY THREES

The most important factor in Coventry's victory was the speed and thrust of their threequarter line.

With Brighton and Jackson particularly dangerous, they handled crisply and proved very difficult to stop once they did get into their stride.

Gloucester's tragedy – the loss of Burford with a torn ligament in his leg – occurred after only a quarter of an hour's play. Up to then Burford had been one of the Red and Whites' most energetic forwards in the loose.

In fact his injury was caused at a time when he was making a great effort to get the ball over Coventry's line for what might have been a score.

MORE SCOPE

But soon after Burford's departure the depleted pack began to see much less of the ball from the set scrums.

And with Coventry's eight also holding an ascendancy in the line-outs, the home team's backs had considerably more scope than Gloucester's outsiders.

Yet despite this advantage, the Midlanders still found Gloucester doing almost as much of the attacking as themselves – thanks to some splendid work by the forwards in the open and alert play by the rest of the team.

Dennis Ibbotson was outstanding both in defence and attack, while Ford and Wells were among other Gloucester forwards who played a notable game.

Gloucester's back division lacked Coventry's co-ordinated thrust, but their halves, John Hobbs and David Jones, were quick to seize opportunities of opening out.

KEEN MARKING

And though the Red and Whites had little success in getting the ball to their wingers by orthodox methods there were some good individual efforts by the threes. Marking and tackling was also very keen.

Brian Sibery, at full back, showed up well under pressure.

Coventry's tries – scored respectively, by Jackson and Stewart – were both gained as a result of some excellent threequarter play. Cole converted one try and kicked the two penalty goals.

Sutton raced over for Gloucester's first try after Ford had dashed up to gather and sling out a long pass when a penalty shot by Baker struck an upright. Baker made a very nice conversion.

The Red and Whites' second try came from Ford who was quick to snap the ball up and plunge over during strong Gloucester forward pressure.

GREAT DAY FOR GLO'STER UNITED

How are the mighty fallen ! The mighty being undefeated Coventry Extra Firsts who met their Waterloo at Kingsholm when a splendid Gloucester United beat them by two goals to a penalty goal.

Three points down at half-time, United fought back and after two or three remarkable strokes of ill-fortune shook the Midlanders with one goal and completely shattered them shortly afterwards with another.

It was a game that rarely rose to great heights, being for the most part a grim struggle between the packs, with the threequarters only too frequently bringing a spark of life into the tussle.

There were one or two incidents which one dislikes to see in rugby, and the Midlanders were the worst offenders. The visiting scrum-half, Jenkins, was spoken to by the referee once or twice and was anything but a favourite with the crowd.

Both packs were penalised far too often for scrum infringements and there was an unwelcome spate of off-sides.

To offset this rather gloomy aspect, however, there were two magnificent tries by Gloucester – both converted by Trevor Jones.

Throughout the second half the home XV's superiority had been building up and at last their efforts were rewarded. Terrington kicked along the ground and Hollingsworth anticipated the bounce beautifully to gather and cut through on his own for a try close in.

Shortly afterwards outside half Perks came down through the middle leaving a trail of defenders behind him, drawing off practically all the defence before passing to right centre Hill. Hill in turn gave to Morgan who ran round behind the posts.

Before this United had had some really back luck. On one occasion Terrington had made an opening and Hill had a clear run through when he had the misfortune to slip.

Later in one of Gloucester's attacks Perks cross-kicked from the wing, two Gloucester players were clean away for a certain try when, by a freak of ill-fortune, the ball struck the base of the upright and bounced off in the wrong direction.

Bad luck notwithstanding, United fully deserved their victory. In the closing stages they had the measure of the Coventry team and were almost impudent in their efforts to keep the game open. Not an outstanding game of rugby, but certainly a fine victory.