

THE CITIZEN

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JUST ANOTHER FORWARD BATTLE IN THE MUD

Put Gloucester and Bristol together on a pitch that is at all soft or muddy, and the odds are that there won't be much more than three points between them when the referee blows "no-side."

At Kingsholm on Saturday they went one better than this and finished up all square – Gloucester claiming a try and Bristol a penalty goal.

Though the ground did not churn up anything like so badly as might have been anticipated following the thaw, it was nevertheless soft enough to handicap the backs to some extent and throw the main burden on the forwards.

And so, for the most part, this 108th encounter between the two famous West Country rivals consisted of a hard battle between two powerful packs. Only very occasionally did any likely-looking attacks come from either set of outsides.

LAST MINUTE

It was rather bad luck for Gloucester that they found themselves deprived of victory almost in the last minute by a Bristol penalty goal. In the second half they had got right on top, and had made the visitors' role primarily a defensive one.

Yet the Red and Whites were themselves partly to blame for their failure to win, through not making the game safe when they had the opportunities.

In the earlier part of the match Bristol had rather the better of things territorially but scarcely ever looked like scoring.

Gradually, however, Gloucester's pack began to take command of things in the loose, and Bristol, fighting back desperately, found their forceful rushes increasingly difficult to contain.

HARD WORKERS

Bob Hodge and Roy Parry were two of the hardest workers in the Gloucester eight, and among others who gave particularly good support were two reserves Don Solomon and M. C. Jones.

Throughout a large part of the game Gloucester had to play second fiddle in set scrums and lineouts, but they were able to harass Bristol's halves so effectively that the visitors profited little from their bigger share of the ball.

Neither did the Red and Whites achieve a great deal of success with their own limited attempts to open out.

Back in the Gloucester side after six or seven weeks on the injured list, wing three-quarter Roy Blair had very little scope – but showed, when he did get the ball, that he has lost none of his speed or determination.

PARRY'S TRY

Gloucester's try was scored mid-way through the second half, when Parry burst through following strong pressure by the home pack. Baker only narrowly failed to convert from wide out.

Cripps levelled the scores with a straight 35 yards penalty goal, when Gloucester were pulled up for offside just before time.