

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 1955

GLOUCESTER FOUGHT BACK, THEN FADED

Experimental three-quarter lines sometimes come off – as Gloucester found to their cost on Saturday, when Neath beat them at the Gnoll by the handsome margin of 26 points to 6.

The Welsh All Blacks, who were fielding two untried centres in F. Grey and G. Hopkins, must have felt very satisfied with the form shown by these newcomers.

And, despite the heavy ground, the Neath back division, as a whole, proved so fast and resourceful in attack that there were times when Gloucester had virtually no answer to their lightning thrusts.

Neath also owed a lot to the opportunism, dash and intelligent handling of their international forwards, Roy John and Brian Sparks, who were towers of strength in the All Blacks' pack.

RALLY FADED

Yet – heavily beaten though they were – Gloucester could console themselves to some extent with the knowledge that more than half of the points which Neath ran up against them were scored while the team were disorganised by the temporary absence, through injury, of full back Brian Sibery.

His return was the signal for a courageous fight-back by the Red and Whites, during which they wrested the initiative from Neath and twice crossed the home line.

But Gloucester's rally faded before the end, and the closing minutes again found them hard-pressed.

A factor which told heavily in Neath's favour was their ability to give their fast-moving backs plenty of scope by winning the lion's share of the ball in the tight.

Gloucester, with far fewer opportunities, made some plucky attempts to open out – John Hobbs and David Jones both working hard – but the Red and Whites' back play was all too quickly disorganised by Neath's close marking.

NEVER GAVE UP

And the All Blacks' quickness on the ball whenever Gloucester's movements did break down proved a constant source of danger.

Among the outstanding forwards in the Gloucester pack which never gave up the struggle were George Hastings, Peter Ford and Don Solomon.

Roy Blair, on the Red and White's left wing, showed speed and determination on the rare occasions when he did get possession, and it was he who raced over for one of Gloucester's tries after taking a pass from Don Hill.

Gloucester's other try was gained by Ford following a line-out near the Neath goal-line.

Tries were scored for Neath by Maddocks (two), Sparks, Hopkins, Roberts and John. Harry Thomas converted one try and kicked a penalty goal, and Sparks also landed a penalty goal.

UNITED WERE QUICK OFF THE MARK

A try in the last minute of the game set the perfect seal on Gloucester United's game with Bristol Aeroplane Company at Kingsholm.

United won by 27 points to 3 but that last try, scored by the visitors' right winger Riddle, was a final and fitting act of defiance from a gallant side that remained undaunted as the score mounted against them.

Within five minutes of the start United had indicated the way things would go with two quick tries, the first from right winger Rees and the second shortly afterwards by Wells.

After that it was United's game.

The Bristol team fought back gallantly and their spirit earned the approval of the crowd but although they often went close, luck was against them.

ENTERTAINING

By half-time left winger Clelland had added two more tries and in the second half Rees and Field scored another try each and Perks was awarded a penalty try.

Full back Trevor Jones converted three, one with a magnificent kick, but also missed some "sitters."

Most of United's tries came from the threes and it was a delight to see a line of red and white shirts cutting through the opposing defence although they were at times irritatingly slow.

JC