

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 1955

LATE RALLY DASHED GLOUCESTER HOPES

For Gloucester R.F.C., making their first appearance at Franklin's Gardens for three years, it was again a case of so near and yet so far !

So, effectively did the Red and White subdue the powerful Saints' team during the first half of the game, that Gloucester seemed well on the way to recording their first victory at Northampton since the war. But it was not to be.

A strong rally in the later stages of the second half enabled the Saints to overhaul their visitors and win a hard, but often exciting, struggle by 11 points to 6.

BIG SHOCK

Gloucester's form and the quality of their teamwork for the greater part of the game must have come as a big shock to Northampton.

The Saints could boast no fewer than eight internationals in their team and – on paper, at any rate – seemed likely to secure a reasonably comfortable victory.

Yet, if Gloucester had seized all their opportunities in the first half, the Red and Whites could have made the game safe before the interval.

To their credit, Northampton generally tried to keep the game open – even though the soft muddy layer on top of the hard ground was by no means ideal for open play.

But until the last quarter of the game their efforts met with scant success. Dropped passes and deadly Gloucester tackling lost them the advantage time and time again.

FAST ATTACKS

But in the last quarter of the game the Saints harassed Gloucester with some clever fast-moving attacks in which their speedy outsides proved infinitely more dangerous than hitherto.

And, making good use of the strong wind which favoured them in the second half, Northampton crossed the Red and Whites' line on three occasions – twice as the result of well judged cross kicks and once through a short, diagonal punt.

The form shown by Gloucester's backs in this game was quite encouraging. In the first half their handling was often surer than that of the Saints, but they just lacked that bit of extra speed and finishing power which would have put on vital points against fast-moving opponents.

Brian Field, making his first appearance in the centre for Gloucester's premier side showed up well both in defence and attack.

Particularly outstanding in a fighting Gloucester pack were the back row trio of Ford, Hodge and Ibbotson.

At full back Gloucester were well served by Ieuan Sheen, who narrowly failed to land two difficult penalty goals with kicks across the wind.

Gloucester led at the interval by six points to nil. Their first try was scored when David Jones picking up inside his own half, broke away and Sutton cross-kicked to send Hollingsworth over.

Peter Ford got the other try with a determined diagonal run from 20 yards out.

Northampton's tries – all gained in the second half – were scored by Hooker, White and Sykes. White converted one.

UNITED LOSE SCRAPPY GAME

Newport High School Old Boys deservedly completed the double over Gloucester United at Kingsholm, defeating the home side by 9 points to nil in a game that compared poorly with the schoolboys match that had gone before.

Very scrappy for most of the time the game never rose to any great heights and was marred throughout by too many penalties.

The United forwards, with M. C. Jones outstanding in the thick of things, matched up well to the Welsh eight but had difficulty in holding them in the loose.

The threequarters showed one or two promising flashes but never displayed quite enough speed or subtlety to evade their Welsh opposites.

Outside half Lewis Morgan was watched with interest for a return of his old form but the long lay-off appears to have left him a little rusty and although his kicking was good he did not shine more than any other player.

Newport's points came from a penalty goal by A. N. Dixey, a drop goal by D. Piper and a try by C. Morgan.