

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 14, 1955

DEPLETED, BUT GLO'STER KEPT INITIATIVE

A win over the Royal Air Force is always something to be proud of. But when the victory is gained by a side who have lost a man early in the game – and when that player is the hooker – it is indeed something to write home about.

Gloucester's 19pts.–8 success at Kingsholm on Saturday was accomplished under such circumstances. And their victory over a team containing four internationals was no fluke.

The Red and Whites won on merit . . . for it was not until the last few minutes that the airmen ever really looked like shaking off Gloucester's iron grip on the game.

CRASH TACKLING

When Mervyn Burford was obliged to go off with nasty cut the role of hooker had to be filled by Roy Parry.

But it then proved beyond the powers of the depleted Red and Whites' pack to win even a moderate share of the ball from the tight.

And with this factor giving the R.A.F. a big advantage, it seemed that before very long the airmen's fast-moving, dangerous backs must inevitably begin to dominate the play.

Yet, to the delight of Gloucester's supporters and to the disillusionment of the R.A.F., things just didn't work out that way !

The Red and Whites' back row trio of Ibbotson, Ford and Hodge strangled many of their opponents' moves if not at birth, at any rate before they had really got into their stride.

Ibbotson, in particular, made a great speciality of harassing and crash tackling the R.A.F.'s Rugby League centres . . . with very satisfactory results for Gloucester.

And whenever the visitors' backs did get away in full cry they came up against further devastating tackling by the home threes, with full-back Ieuan Sheen making a fine last line of defence.

GOOD SUPPORT

But it was certainly not a case of Gloucester spending much of the time with their backs to the wall, Quite the reverse !

For the greater part of the game it was the Red and Whites' who were doing most of the pressing thanks to the splendid efforts of their seven forwards in the loose and some good support work by the rest of the team.

Peter Ford was again an outstanding attacking forward for the Red and Whites, while D. A. Jones, their hefty new policeman recruit, earned loud applause by bursting through for a great try from more than 30 yards out.

A special pat on the back is due to Gloucester winger Michael Baker, who made a notable contribution to victory by gaining no fewer than 16 of the side's 19 points.

His personal total was made up of a try, two conversions and three penalty goals – some of his kicks being exceptionally good ones.

The Air Force tries were scored, respectively, by two of their speedy threequarters, right wing Cpl. P. Hunt and left centre AC B. Howard.

Hunt got his score after slipping two tackles in a great touch line dash, while Howard crossed following a quick heel only a few yards from Gloucester's line.

Sewell converted the second try.

JC