

# THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1984

GLOUCESTER'S LATE RALLY NOT ENOUGH

GLOUCESTER 19 Pts., SWANSEA 20 Pts.

Swansea began the new rugby season at 3 pm on Saturday, while Gloucester opted for a 4 pm start !

For an hour the All Whites were in complete control. There were ominous black clouds over Gloucester's performance and a disquieting shuffling of feet in the stand.

It was approaching 4 pm when Swansea lock John Williams dived over for his team's fourth try and, at that stage, Gloucester were lucky to be on the same ground.

Their contribution to the first hour had been three penalties by Tim Smith, and the best one could say was that they were hanging on grimly.

But what a difference a break makes.

Suddenly new boy Mike Evans, who had started quietly, produced a real sizzler.

Swansea's back-row, the architects of so much in the first half, were left flat-footed and the little RAF man scorched away with winger Nick Price on his left to take a try scoring pass.

EXCITING

The tempo of their game increased dramatically and at a stroke the early lethargy was replaced by a frenzy of activity. Apart from actually snatching a win, a more exciting finish would be hard to imagine.

Flanker Mike Longstaff, a star of yesterday, gave notice that he is fully intent on rising again tomorrow, with an individual try of startling class.

Drifting off a set scrum, he was sent on his way by Baker and glided through Swansea's defence on a ghost-like run which included as neat a dummy as one could imagine.

He was over in the corner in a flash and then only a single point separated the scores.

It was a dramatic finish which left skipper John Orwin disappointed but sent Cherry and White supporters happily on their way home full of anticipation for the next match.

While Gloucester never achieved Swansea's fluency behind the scrum and the forwards were worried into giving scrum-half Steve Baker some indifferent possession, the team played with character to come back from a seemingly hopeless situation.

#### SPIRIT

"I was personally disappointed – after all, we lost – but we played with plenty of spirit and there is a lot to build on," said Orwin.

It had been, he thought, an excellent team effort after a slow start.

"I thought Mike Longstaff had a very sound game and was always close to the action. Mike Evans also played well on his debut and made a great break for the try that put us back in the game," he said.

But Orwin was kicking himself for calling the two-man line-out from which Williams scored Swansea's fourth try.

"On reflection it would have been much easier for us to cover our line with seven men than two. It was a mistake, and perhaps it cost us victory," he said.

Supporters will not look at it that way. Swansea were the superior team on the day and well worth their win with tries by Mark Thomas (2), Robert Jones and John Williams, and two conversions by Roger Blyth.

MAN OF THE MATCH : Richard Pascall. There was plenty of action in an uncompromising forward battle and while it was never really clear what was going on, Gloucester's prop came in for plenty of stick. But he stuck to his guns and fully lived up to the title of Mike Burton's book: "Never Stay Down."

### UNITED NEAR TO GREAT DOUBLE

SWANSEA ATH. NIL GLOUCESTER UTD. 21 PTS

United gave a great performance to win their opening game of the season.

Newcomers, Andy Richards, who tackled excellently and fullback Peter Wickenden, whose goal kicking was first class, came through well.

A Wickenden penalty and a try by scrum half Marcus Hannaford gave Gloucester the half time advantage and in the second half they dominated play to score twice more.

Skipper Paul Wood scored the first try and number eight Larry Cummins was awarded the second following a pushover by the forwards. Both were converted by Wickenden.

BROUGHTON PARK A 6 Pts., GLOUCESTER UTD. 6 Pts.

A late penalty by the Park thwarted Gloucester's bid for a unique double.

United were well served by full back Paul Ford and fly-half Steve Parsloe while Colts player Clive Banks and newcomer Mike Webb also played well.

Ford opened the scoring with a penalty after five minutes and a second penalty was converted by Parsloe after Ford had been injured.

Park's scoring was restricted to two penalty goals.

JC