

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1984

DECISION TIME TO COME FOR SELECTORS

GLOUCESTER 20 PTS., MAESTEG 16 PTS.

Gloucester, clearly the superior team, left more questions unanswered than solved in an uneventful game against stubborn Maesteg at Kingsholm last night.

Supporters are still picking their own best team and were left with plenty to discuss at the end of an interesting if curiously subdued match.

Doubtless the swapping and changing will continue for the next two games – at Pontypridd on Saturday and Newbridge next Wednesday.

But the selectors will have to lay their cards on the table a week today when they sit down to pick the team to play Bristol.

Will Peter Wickenden oust Tim Smith? Can Jim Breeze force his way into the team?

Will Nick Price and Steve Baker stave off the challenge of Richards and Hannaford? Wickenden, Breeze, Price and Baker all played soundly last night and the final choice will be a difficult one.

The selectors will certainly be seeking a consistent goal-kicker. Penalties will be crucial at a higher level and the kicker who proves most reliable in the next two matches could well be slipping into the number 15 shirt to face the old enemy. A lot of scoring chances went begging last night in a game that should have been won by a much more comfortable margin.

It was a stop-start affair, with far too many penalties awarded when the operation of the advantage law would have helped the flow of the game and benefitted the patience of supporters.

Gloucester won a lot of possession and were more adventurous with Baker playing wisely and at his best round the blindside where he produced some penetrating little runs and a couple of deft kicks.

The wingers had few real chances though Price, put clear by Wickenden, ran strongly for Gloucester's first try and was unlucky not to be awarded a second, while Breeze produced one of the most exciting runs of the match.

Maesteg stuck gamely to their task but they were generally out-gunned in the forward exchanges and kicked most of the possession away.

As the kicking game progressed they were kept in contention by former Welsh international Gwyn Evans who converted five penalties.

For Gloucester's part Wickenden opened with two penalties and Price added a try to make the score 10-6 at half-time.

Hamlin took over the kicking duties in the second-half and was successful with a 35 metre penalty before skipper John Orwin charged over for a try from a tap penalty move.

The game seldom looked like coming to the boil while Evans kept plugging away with penalty goals and Hamlin wrapped things up for Gloucester with his second successful kick.

MAN OF THE MATCH : John Orwin. . . between the penalties he was always in the action.