

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1984

SMITH SAVES THE BLUSHES

GLOUCESTER 22 Pts., CHELTENHAM 15 Pts.

Gloucester produced a lacklustre performance only given respectability by an injury-time try from flanker Ian Smith.

The score was the last act in a game that failed to ignite from the kick-off as both sides, admittedly hampered by a greasy ball and slippery surface, performed at a funeral pace, short of cohesion and short of concentration.

Cheltenham, losers of 12 out of 16 games so far this season, must have been happy to have run their old rivals so close but Gloucester fans, hoping for a bonanza, went home disappointed.

It could have been worse. Cheltenham's New Zealand find Colin Williamson gave his adopted side the lead an astonishing four times with his accurate penalty kicking and an upset was very much on the cards until two tries in the last 12 minutes gave Gloucester victory.

Showing 10 changes from the side that has been winning so impressively recently, Gloucester's lack of fluency was highlighted after four minutes when fly-half Williamson kicked Cheltenham into the lead from a penalty awarded with several players offside under the posts.

Winger Derrick Morgan edged Gloucester into the lead with a try after scrummage possession on the line but Williamson restored the Cheltenham advantage with another well struck penalty.

Back came Gloucester through Clive Dyke, who touched down after a Morgan break, but the conversion, like the earlier one, was fluffed by the out-of-form Paul Ford who had also missed two penalty attempts.

Cheltenham regained the lead just before the interval with yet another penalty from Williamson, who has scored all Cheltenham points in their last three games.

Fly-half Mike Evans was handed the kicking duties in the second half and landed a simple chance to once again put Gloucester in the lead – and Williamson it was who put Cheltenham ahead for the fourth time with another penalty from another offside infringement.

Despite the see-sawing scoreline the game was not alight; the Gloucester forward machine was out of gear and mishandling among the backs reached epidemic proportions.

But they took the lead once again with an Evans penalty. Morgan chased a hack ahead for his second try and Smith charged over in injury time for the final score. After the county match fireworks at the weekend – something of a damp squib.

Gloucester: P. Ford; D. Morgan, C. Dyke, D. Pointon, J. Breeze; M. Evans, R. Wood; G. Sargent, G. Mann, R. Pascall, J. Orwin (capt.), J. Brain, J. Bennett, I. Smith, L. Cummins.

Cheltenham: P. Boyle; M. Withecombe, A. Kitching, P. Keegan, M. Rafferty; C. Williamson, J. Little; A. Torkoniak, S. Everall, N. Smart, P. Geenty, P. Waite, P. Ahern, M. Doulton, C. Scott.

Referee: Mr. A. Reay (Bristol).

MAN OF THE MATCH: Derrick Morgan – for his finishing power.

JC