

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1984

GLOUCESTER GO ON TIGER HUNT

GLOUCESTER 37 Pts., LEICESTER 15 Pts.

Glorious Gloucester ruined Dusty Hare's 32nd birthday celebrations at Kingsholm. The former England full-back kicked Leicester ahead after a minute, but that served only to spark a Gloucester performance that, during the first half at least, was easily the best of the season.

The Cherry and Whites hit back with determined, flowing rugby after Hare's early penalty. Their 15 man game ripped through the Tigers' defensive cover.

At half-time Gloucester led 25-3 and by the end they had secured victory by four goals, a try and three penalties to two goals and a penalty.

Vice-captain Paul Taylor said: "That first half was the best I've ever played in at Kingsholm." Coach Bob Redwood added: "I'd happily settle for a repeat performance against Bath away next Saturday."

Leicester had no answer to the powerful Gloucester display. Solid scrummaging and rucking kept the visitors under tremendous pressure with the back row of Ian Smith, John Gadd and Mike Teague in magnificent form.

The strength, speed and accuracy of scrum-half Marcus Hannaford allowed outside-half Mike Hamlin the time and space he revelled in and the threequarters ripped into Leicester with a series of incisive runs.

Richard Mogg is nearing his best once more, while fellow centre Taylor caused Leicester major problems and on the wings Nick Price and Derrick Morgan stretched the Tigers time and again.

On a wet and muddy day the handling and passing was incredibly good.

Full-back Tim Smith is still producing the consistent form he has shown during a Gloucester revival that has seen them win 10 of their last 11 matches.

It's easy to get carried away with a display like this and it is true that for some time in the second half Gloucester relaxed and lost the drive that had crushed Leicester during the opening 40 minutes.

But for most of the game Gloucester produced the powerful, stylish rugby that has made them one of the top clubs in Britain and tempted me to switch my career in sports journalism to the City.

Leicester played their part in an entertaining match, but they were always second best against a determined Gloucester in full flight.

After Hare's early penalty Gloucester took charge, levelling the score when Smith kicked a penalty and then sweeping forward to run up another 22 points in a 15 minute spell.

Hooker Kevin White, Hannaford, prop Richard Pascall and Hamlin scored tries with Smith converting three times.

There were several more close calls for Leicester. Three times Gloucester players crossed the line, but were unable to ground the ball as Leicester defended desperately.

The best of those first half tries was scored by Pascall, who finished a move started by a Hannaford break. Gadd also played a big part and Pascall was up quickly in support, running over to touch down.

After the interval Gloucester visibly relaxed and Leicester hit back with tries from Jez Harris and Dave Richards, Hare converting both. Gloucester's only reply was a Smith penalty.

For a moment it seemed Leicester might close the gap further, but Gloucester struck back with a second Hannaford try plus a conversion and penalty from Smith.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Marcus Hannaford.

RECORD GOES

LEICESTER EXTRAS 22 Pts., GLOUCESTER UNITED 21 Pts.

Gloucester United surrendered their unbeaten record in a thriller at Welford-rd.

But they were well-served by the forwards where Phil Blakeway, playing his first match of the season, hooker Glyn Mann and prop Peter Jones took two tight heads. Dick Burn won some useful line-out and the United back row of Wood, Bennett and Longstaff were also in good form.

United led 18-10 at half-time but slipped behind to a classy Leicester back division in the second half.

Scorers:

Leicester; Cusworth, penalty, dropped goal; Dodge, conversion, two penalties; Evans, 2 tries.

Gloucester; Pointon, two dropped goals, try; Ford, 3 penalties, conversion.

JC