

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1984

GLOUCESTER PACK PAYS PENALTY

BATH 19 PTS., GLOUCESTER 9 PTS.

Gloucester promised a lot but achieved little in this South West Rugby Merit Table match against Bath at the Recreation Ground. They produced another powerful display and earned plenty of possession, but could not break the hard tackling and solid Bath defence.

In a bruising match referee Brian Riley (Liverpool) did not help matters by missing off-the-ball foul play on a number of occasions and constantly penalising Gloucester props Richard Pascall and Malcolm Preedy.

Riley was spot on when he noted Preedy's name as a final warning during the first half. Over-enthusiasm carried Preedy too far on occasions and Riley's warning had the desired effect.

But he looked wrong when penalising Preedy in particular for collapsing the scrum. On one occasion Riley awarded Bath a penalty when the scrum went down three metres from the Bath line. But what point was there in Gloucester collapsing with Bath under so much pressure ?

Gloucester skipper John Orwin said afterwards: "We were disappointed with the referee.

"He kept penalising us for collapsing when our lads were not doing a thing. And sometimes it was the referee's fault. "He was holding the scrum down too long before allowing play to carry on. If the ball had gone straight in there would have been no problem."

It was a match between two quality teams. Both were well organised and committed in a bruising forward battle.

John Player Cup holders Bath won mainly because centre John Palmer kicked five penalties from six attempts. They also scored the only try.

PRESSURE

A key area was in the back row. John Gadd, Ian Smith and Mike Teague battled fiercely, but the Bath trio of Roger Spurrell, John Hall and Paul Simpson kept up tremendous pressure.

Bath's hopes were not harmed at all by the appearance of replacement hooker Jimmy Deans, who went on for the injured Rob Cunningham with 12 minutes left.

By that time Bath were on top, but Gloucester pressure had threatened a recovery.

For a hooker Deans made a big impact with his contribution in the loose, helping to keep the Gloucester back row under pressure and stem their comeback bid.

Locks Orwin and John Brain played storming games for Gloucester. Brain was at his best in the line-out.

Five Palmer penalties plus a try from Richard Hill early in the second half gave Bath victory with Gloucester's reply from a Mogg dropped goal after only four minutes, plus two penalties from full-back Tim Smith.

It was a bitterly disappointing defeat for Gloucester after Mogg's early dropped goal had put them ahead, but it was still a useful performance against a Bath side unbeaten at home and against all English opposition this season.

BOTTOM

Defeats by Bristol and Bath have left Gloucester bottom of the South West Merit table, but skipper Orwin says: "We only have to finish in the top five to qualify for next season's John Player Cup and we still have Bath and Bristol to play again.

And he added with a grin: "Even if those go against us we could qualify by winning the Cup this season!"

Gloucester: T. Smith; D. Morgan, R. Mogg, P. Taylor, N. Price; M. Hamlin, M. Hannaford; M. Preedy, K. White, R. Pascall, J. Orwin, J. Brain, J. Gadd, I. Smith, M. Teague.

Replacements: M. Evans, D. Spencer.

Bath: C. Martin; D. Trick, J. Palmer, A. Rees, B. Trevaskis; J. Horton, R. Hill; G. Chilcott, R. Cunningham, R. Lee, N. Gaymond, N. Redman, R. Spurrell, J. Hall, P. Simpson.

J. Deans replaced Cunningham after 68 minutes.

Referee: B. Riley (Liverpool).

MAN OF THE MATCH: John Orwin, just ahead of John Brain and Mike Teague.

UNITED TOPPLED

GLOUCESTER UTD. 15 PTS., BATH UTD. 17 PTS.

Two tries in two minutes by Bath crushed Gloucester's hopes of preserving their ground record.

Bath were on top for most of the game, denying Gloucester possession in the forwards and causing problems in the backs.

For Gloucester, outside-half Dave Pointon with limited opportunities drove the visitors back with good line kicking. Centre Rees Ellis had a good game in all aspects.

Bath scored a try midway through the first-half and directly from the kick-off went through with another. Full-back Peter Wickenden reduced the arrears with two penalties, but Bath went further ahead with a penalty to lead 11-6 at half-time.

In the second half Pointon dropped a goal for Gloucester from a surging scrum but Bath sealed the game with two further penalties.

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