

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1984

GLO'STER RUN INTO TROUBLE

GLOUCESTER 6 Pts., NEWPORT 6 Pts.

Gloucester stretched their unbeaten home run to fourteen games despite questionable tactics against the formidable Welshmen.

They tried to continue the expansive style which earned them a memorable 58-12 victory against Coventry the week before. But the sticky, waterlogged conditions at Kingsholm, and the much stronger opposition called for a change of style.

As skipper John Orwin conceded after the game, "We should have done a lot more up-and-under kicking instead of trying to run the ball again."

Even so, victory was there for the taking in the final minutes of the game as Newport conceded two crucial penalties. Both were in similar positions and full back Tim Smith smoothly converted the first to put Gloucester on level terms for the first time in the match.

But he pulled his second shot wide and the chance of a snatched victory quickly vanished as Bristol referee Roger Mayo ended the game.

Gloucester, playing with an unchanged side for the fourth successive game, nevertheless showed why they have been enjoying a run of success.

In the scrums they matched Newport's redoubtable pack and even took a second half scrummage against the head. In the line out Orwin and Brain provided plenty of possession. And in the loose, despite the appalling conditions underfoot, there was no lack of enterprise or effort.

Outside half Mike Hamlin's big touch-finders played a major part in Gloucester's attacks and with Marcus Hannaford still playing with confident ease the threequarters were able to mount many more raids than might have been expected on the soggy ground.

Newport were stern in defence, however, and only allowed Gloucester to penetrate twice. On the first occasion winger Nick Price scorched through but his pass to the back row was dropped. Then Paul Taylor crossed the line and claimed a corner try – but the referee signalled a forward pass.

Newport, in contrast, had only one real try scoring opportunity and made the most of it.

After just two minutes they scored from a scrum on Gloucester's line. Number eight Dave Waters broke away and fed scrum half Gerald Williams who put winger Marc Batten clear for the score. Newport's top scorer Mike Lewis added the conversion.

From then on the pattern was for long periods of Gloucester pressure, punctuated by sudden Newport breakouts which Gloucester were able to contain in their own 22.

Smith kicked a 28th minute penalty, failed with two more, but then scored the equaliser just three minutes from the end.

It was all a far cry from the ten-try humiliation of Coventry the previous Saturday when Derrick Morgan ran in four tries, Nick Price got a hat trick and there were one apiece for Smith, Taylor and Orwin. Smith, on that occasion, was almost infallible with his kicking as he landed nine conversions for a personal tally of 22 points.

Nevertheless this draw was just as important in its way for, when compared with the drubbing Gloucester suffered at Rodney Parade two months ago, and the narrow defeat in the home fixture with Newport last year, it is a revealing indicator of Gloucester's much improved form.

Teams : –

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

Newport: J. Callard; M. Batten, C. Williams, P. Daniel, C. Wood; M. Lewis, G. Williams; J. Rawlins, M. Watkins (capt.), R. Morgan, J. Widdecombe, A. Perry, R. Powell, R. Collins, D. Waters.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Ian Smith. A fine all round display.

HONOURS EVEN

NEWPORT UTD. 8 PTS., GLOUCESTER UTD. 8 PTS.

In a close tussle at Rodney Parade, both teams scored two unconverted tries.

For Gloucester flanker Andy Stanley was prominent and lock Dick Byrne had a good game. In the heavy conditions good handling was restricted but Gloucester still managed to move the ball about.

In the first half Newport took the lead with a try and in the second half Gloucester hit back with a try from winger Jim Breeze after the ball had been kicked through from deep inside the Gloucester half.

Centre Clive Dyke scored the other Gloucester try from broken play and Newport replied with another touchdown.

JC