

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 1985

JOHN PLAYER CUP SPECIAL

DERRICK'S DOUBLE LEADS GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTER 31, HARLEQUINS 12

TRIES of sparkling quality by wingers Derrick Morgan and Nick Price sent Gloucester through to the semi-finals of the John Player Cup. Former Longlevens player Morgan scored twice and Price, who joined Gloucester from Old Cryptians, scored once, in a deserved victory against Harlequins at Kingsholm.

"They are the most important tries I have ever scored," said Morgan. "This is my first season in the John Player Cup and I have scored in all three ties so far, but these two against Harlequins were vital, they came at the right moment.

"But it is all down to the big lads. I just finish off their good work and the openings they create."

Gloucester were far from their best against a Harlequins side which put up defiant opposition, but they had the edge even though several players struggled to produce their normal form.

The tension of the occasion and the ferocity of the Harlequins challenge had a lot to do with that, but neither factor seemed to affect fly-half Mike Hamlin.

His line kicking rescued Gloucester and frustrated Harlequins when the visitors turned on the pressure at the end of the first half and early in the second.

Hamlin also created the first try with a beautifully timed break which led to Morgan going over.

The performance of flanker David Cooke was the highlight of a useful Harlequins performance which kept them in with a chance for an hour. Then an injury forced hooker John Oler to limp off and the London challenge evaporated.

They were victims of their own lack of thought !

Gloucester always had cover for the specialist positions of scrum-half and hooker – Peter Kingston and Steve Mills were replacements on Saturday – but Harlequins did not take similar precautions and suffered the consequences.

The loss of Oler left them without hope. Scottish international prop Iain Milne tried his hand in the middle of the front row and threw in at the line-out. Milne was a total disaster at both jobs.

When Oler went off Gloucester led 18-12. Within minutes they ran in a try and took complete control to finish comfortable winners.

By half-time Gloucester led 12-6 thanks to a try by Morgan plus a conversion and two penalties from full-back Tim Smith. The Harlequins reply was from full-back Marcus Rose, who kicked two penalties.

Another Smith penalty put Gloucester nine points ahead soon after the interval, but Harlequins hit back with a try by Chris Butcher, converted by Rose.

At that stage Harlequins looked capable of causing an upset and even when Smith kicked a penalty the tie was still in the balance.

Then came the Oler injury and Gloucester piled up the points. After scoring 29 against both Richmond and Saracens in earlier rounds, Gloucester took their tally past the 30 mark and extended their uneaten home run to 19 matches.

Poor play by Harlequins allowed Gloucester to extend their lead when a Smith penalty hit a post. David Cooke knocked on as the ball dropped and Bill Cuthbertson, standing offside collected to concede another penalty.

Smith kicked the easy chance and then played a part as Morgan scored his second try. The winger fended off two tackles before going over.

The scoring was completed when a Morgan tackle left Harlequins in trouble. Hannaford and Hamlin combined and Price scored with Smith converting.

GLOUCESTER : T. Smith; D. Morgan, R. Mogg, P. Taylor, N. Price; M. Hamlin, M. Hannaford; P. Blakeway, K. White, R. Pascall, J. Orwin, J. Brain, J. Gadd, I. Smith, M. Teague.
Replacements : P. Kingston, S. Mills.

HARLEQUINS : M. Rose; A. Dent, A. Thompson, J. Salmon, J. Sargent; R. Cramb, A. Woodhouse; I. Milne, J. Olnier, P. Curtis, R. Longhorn, B. Cuthbertson, D. Cooke, E. Weekes, C. Butcher.
W. Wall replaced Olnier.
Other replacement : R. Lawrence.

REFEREE : D. Leslie (Manchester).

JC