

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2002

CLINICAL GLOUCESTER OVERWHELM PARMA

GLOUCESTER 99 G.R.A.N. PARMA 0

With about 10 minutes remaining at a gloom-covered Kingsholm, where the only light came from Gloucester's revitalising performance, Matthew Dowling was replaced as G.R.A.N. Parma full-back.

As he trotted over to the bench, he gleamed through the gathering darkness, resplendent in almost immaculate kit.

Considering Gloucester were on their way to their highest competitive score by a rout of 15 tries, it was more than a touch surprising he had not put himself about a little more.

It summed up Parma's day. In the many and varied streets of rugby union, the Italians are not even on the same road map as Gloucester.

The Cherry and Whites had more pace and power, were more concerted and more clinical. Without over exerting themselves they systematically picked Parma apart to finish one point short of their century.

There were some experiments along the way, noticeably Andy Hazell on the wing in place of Diego Albanese and Trevor Woodman in his first stint at hooker, although he retired to the bench before being asked to throw into a line-out, but probably not through nerves.

In fact, the most worrying problem for Gloucester came in the grandstand. Would the scoreboard take three figures?

It did not matter in the end, but by now the party and their rugby had done the talking.

There were no burning effigies of Rob Andrew in the Shed, but a rousing statement from owner Tom Walkinshaw went a long way to reassuring the home supporters following Andrew's allegations of racism from the crowd last weekend. They roared their approval.

This was a day when it was vital Kingsholm did not lose its usual bite or hostility, after the sickening events of the previous seven days.

The Gloucester crowd managed to do it perfectly.

Not only did they raise the roof for every one of the 15 tries, but they roared their traditional throaty roar and also showed a fine appreciation for every Parma effort. It was a shame Andrew was not in the crowd to witness it.

He surely would have been suitably embarrassed.

There was plenty to offer from Gloucester; this was another of those days for scrum-half Clive Stuart-Smith, who is not afraid to put his head over the ball when the boots were flying, James Forrester, who showed all his speed and devilish appetite, and Koli Sewabu.

Sewabu has had limited opportunities so far this season, but he is quick and has good hands and he was able to claim two well worked tries based around his speed. He had a splendid afternoon of it.

Gloucester's power came from the front five who demolished Parma bit by bit in the scrum and out-tackled and out-rucked them to turn over a host of possession.

The forcefulness of Trevor Woodman, Patrice Collazo and Junior Paramore, to name but three, carved the Italians to pieces in the tight and set phases, before powering them along in the loose.

It allowed Daren O'Leary to score five tries, the third a very special effort from a pass by Hazell. The Gloucester winger beat his man before chasing his own kick to score past three more defenders.

Despite the magnificence of the scoreline, Gloucester were not totally faultless. There is still a good deal for Henry Paul to do, but he showed glimpses of his very special talent with a couple of arching breaks and impish sleight of hand.

He scored a try and kicked 12 of the 15 conversions. It was just the sort of practice he needed with the boot.

This was a massive endorsement of Philippe Saint-Andre's squad because they showed here how clinical they could be. They never relented.

What would a game be without a try from James Forrester these days and he managed one in the first period, while Terry Fanolua also touched down.

Parma, to their eternal credit, battled manfully to the end and you felt for their efforts, but they were simply overpowered and out-gunned.

Joe Ewens was in at the start of the second period before Hazell buzzed home for Gloucester's tenth try.

Their eleventh was a very fine score centred around Jon Goodridge and O'Leary before Stuart-Smith slid his way over as the Parma defence was picked apart again.

Gloucester were never seriously tested in defence and they made the most of the possession they dominated thanks largely to their superior force and power.

There was more to come from O'Leary and Paul and the superb Paramore as Gloucester declared their Shield intent before their trip to La Rochelle.

Unfortunately for Matthew Dowling and his team mates, their participation in the competition is almost at an end.

GLOUCESTER: J. Goodridge; D. O'Leary, J. Ewens, T. Fanolua, D. Albanese; H. Paul, C. Stuart-Smith; T. Woodman, C. Fortey, P. Collazo, R. Fidler, E. Pearce, K. Sewabu, J. Forrester, J. Paramore.
Reps.: D. Yachvili, L. Mercier, R. Todd, A. Hazell, P. Vickery, A. Eustace, A. Deacon.

G.R.A.N. PARMA: M. Dowling; M. de Rossi, N. Aldrov Caffaratti, P. D. Antoni; J. Boden, T. Francke; D. Gatti, P. Simeone, H. Nieto, F. Minello, P. Carra, F. Soncini, E. Candiago, D. Colli.
Reps.: M. Alonso, D. Copelli, P. Ceron, L. Beduschi, G. Rodriguez, L. Villagra.

REFEREE: K. Evans (Wales).

STAR MAN: Daren O'Leary.

ATTENDANCE: 6,567

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