

THE CITIZEN

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COACH BLASTS THE PLAYERS AFTER A BELOW PAR CUP PERFORMANCE

TURNER ISSUES A SHIELD WARNING

Paul Turner issued a storm-force warning to Gloucester last night following their Powergen Cup defeat by London Irish – 'play like that again and we can forget the Shield as well.'

The Gloucester coach was in a restless mood after Barry Everitt had inspired Irish to a semi-final appearance on their own ground with a virtuoso display at stand-off.

The Irish number 10 collected 20 of their 25 points in their thumping success and Turner was full of praise for the Irishman.

"If we make the same sort of mistakes we made against Irish we can forget the Parker Pen Shield as well as far as I am concerned," he said

"We copped it big style. We were not as clever or smart as Irish were and they taught us a lesson in wet weather play.

"Barry Everitt didn't put a foot wrong all day.

"His goal-kicking was immaculate and with some of his kicking in the second half he crucified us and we could not match it.

"This was a very harsh lesson in wet weather football for us."

Gloucester recovered from gifting Paul Sackey an early try when he collected a fumble from Terry Fanolua and raced away to score.

But the Cherry and Whites hit back with a lovely little try from Andy Gomarsall after powerful surges from Jake Boer and Pierre Caillet.

However that was as good as it got for Gloucester as Irish converted their chances into points and strangled the life out of Philippe Saint-Andre's charges.

"We were facing a 30-point defeat at one stage and that would have been a harsh lesson for us," Turner said.

"London Irish were a lot better in the basic qualities of their play – they were a lot cleverer."

Saint-Andre took the decision to rest a number of key performers with this Friday's Shield quarter-final against Ebbw Vale now five days away.

With Patrice Collazo, Mark Cornwell, Adam Eustace, Andy Hazell and Junior Paramore all left out, his selection reflected as much.

Robert Todd was ruled out through injury along with winger Diego Albanese.

"We have a big game on Friday night and it is very difficult to stay focussed on three competitions," said Saint-Andre.

"We played well in La Rochelle last week but came back with Trevor Woodman banned and Phil Vickery with a broken hand.

"It was my decision not to risk players."