

# THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2002

MELVILLE SEES HIS SIDE WELL BEATEN

DISORGANISED GLOUCESTER ARE HUMBLLED BY A FIVE-TRY  
LOFTUS ROAD BARRAGE

WASPS 44 GLOUCESTER 9

Back in December, Gloucester made the trip to the capital, if not quite in rude good health, then with a real appetite to end their Loftus Road horror-run.

On that occasion their efforts were frozen off.

Last night they were completely frozen out – run ragged and humbled five tries to nil.

In what was probably their worst performance of the season, Gloucester crumbled to a disorganised and messy defeat, characterised by a lack of and communication[*sic*].

It was only the second time this season Wasps had secured a bonus point at home, but they were always in command and thoroughly deserved their victory that was the culmination of a hard working set-piece and a crushing superiority in the three-quarters.

There was a bubbling intensity below the surface all evening and it blew up in the first period when Robert Todd and Paul Volley were sent off for an ugly fight the Gloucester man won hands down – it proved no consolation.

The fact it was Volley on the receiving end is unlikely to bother Gloucester too much, but the loss of their centre affected the Cherry and Whites more.

He is the link-man in midfield, and without him there was no platform or structure when possession eventually arrived from the half-backs.

But by then Gloucester were already behind to two Alex King penalties and a splendid try from Josh Lewsey who took Fraser Water's pass to score out wide.

It was a try that possessed everything Gloucester could not muster – a smothered line-out, power and precision out wide and a deadly finishing streak.

Gloucester's game-plan had been to hound King into errors. But such was Wasps' control, he finished with an immaculate haul of 20 points in an unruffled display.

Wasps scored again shortly before the break when King's arching break unearthed a little room and he sent Stuart Abbott racing in to score.

Gloucester's nine points had come from three Ludovic Mercier penalties and, while they were 11 points behind at the break, it certainly was not a disaster. Yet Gloucester could not even revert to their usual forward dominance for a respite.

They scrummaged hard, but in Craig Dowd and Will Green, Wasps have two mighty men in the tight and the small matter of Ian Jones in the line-out.

It took them only three minutes to score their third try after the break, although it was an amazing decision to award the score.

But, considering referee Ashley Rowden had previously sent two players off when he did not appear to have a decent view of the incident, it came as little surprise when he awarded the try to Trevor Leota, despite the hooker looking to be a few feet short of the line when he was tackled by Andy Deacon.

There was little zip or fizz to Gloucester – they were strangely subdued in most aspects of their effort and never looked like scoring a try.

There was no clear pattern to phases or structure in attack – the only man who made the gain-line was Terry Fanolua, who showed his usual heart and application.

Gloucester will point to the fact that games against Bristol, Bath and Leeds will secure them second spot. But they never looked like winning in a performance that will give Nigel Melville crystal clear clarity of what he needs to alter.

Gloucester did not score a point in the second half, but Wasps scored twice more.

First, after King had dropped a goal, he set up a break for Shane Roiser that took play to beneath the posts and Martyn Wood scampered over through the bodies.

Their last try came near the end when Gloucester, on the retreat, coughed up possession and Mark Lock bundled over from close range to add the gloss.

Kenny Logan kicked the touchline conversion for an emphatic look to the scoreline. But if Wasps had any concerns about Melville's return, in case he passed too many secrets on to his new club, they need not have worried.

WASPS: J. Lewsey; S. Rosier, F. Waters, S. Abbott, P. Sampson; A. King, M. Wood; C. Dowd, T. Leota, W. Green, S. Shaw, I. Jones, J. Worsley, P. Volley, L. Dallaglio.

Reps.: M. Friday, S. Green, K. Logan, M. Denney, M. Lock, J. Beardshaw, A. Mackenzie.

GLOUCESTER: D. O'Leary; D. Albanese, T. Fanolua, R. Todd, T. Beim;  
L. Mercier, A. Gomarsall; P. Collazo, C. Fortey, A. Deacon, R. Fidler,  
M. Cornwell, J. Forrester, J. Boer, J. Paramore.  
Reps.: D. Yachvili, H. Paul, J. Ewens, O. Azam, F. Pucciariello,  
K. Sewabu, E. Pearce.

REFEREE: Ashley Rowden (RFU).

STAR MAN: Terry Fanolua.

JC