

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1964

GLOUCESTER WIN FIRST GAME, BUT TACKLE NEW LAWS

WITH CAUTION

GLOUCESTER 9 Pts., WATERLOO 3 Pts.

There was little evidence of a sweeping change when the new laws were tried in serious combat for the first time on Saturday evening at Kingsholm; cautious rather than adventurous was the tone of the game.

At a recent trial it seemed that there was more open play and the double-banking and sparsely manned line-outs which the new laws permit had the merit of novelty.

But on Saturday the game was in earnest. It was a club fixture rather than a trial and so the pattern of play was rather like one of Gloucester's more enterprising matches before the new laws.

There was the inevitable playing to the pack, the touch-kicking and rather more line-outs than one would have expected.

FINE DEBUT

Fly-half Terry Hopson, who scored a good drop-goal for Gloucester, got in some fine touch-finders whose length was rivalled only by those of international full-back Don Rutherford, making his debut for Gloucester.

It was evident that speed and quick penetration will be virtues more needed by a successful team than weight.

Several times I noticed the superb acceleration of wing forward Dick Smith who linked up with the Gloucester threes frequently and made breaks of more use than John Bayliss whose tendency to try to carry the entire opposition on his shoulders indicates a reluctance to pass. His centre partner John Vallender seemed a good deal more effective and evasive.

NO VERDICT YET

Andi Foice, the ex-Cheltenham winger showed a burst of speed comparable with Tony Osman on the other flank.

I am told that Foice is a very good player but, since I have seen him only in the rough and tumble of Cheltenham v Gloucester matches, I will not pass judgement yet, save to say that he seems to have a potential which was not realised on Saturday.

In short he fumbled a good pass which could have made the only try of the match !

Rutherford made his mark. He is plainly destined to be a favourite with the crowd – after cheekily trying to kick a place goal from five yards inside his own half, and narrowly missing at that.

SUPERB GOAL

This, and his superb drop goal from 45 yards, were plainly what the crowd (and I) needed to arouse a little enthusiasm. Rutherford, eye-catching ploys apart, has the safest pair of hands I have ever seen.

Of the forwards Dave Owen, at his rightful lock position following Gary White's departure, played an effective game. He is one of Rugby's least showy players and does a great deal of work both in the mauls, and in getting the ball into the open.

Hooker, Mike Nicholls showed he is determined to keep up with Rugby's faster pace but Alan Brinn seemed ill at ease at prop. Roy Long proved the better of Gloucester's two line-out jumpers although Hal Symonds had an energetic game.

SCRUM PROBLEM

The use of Brinn and Brian Hudson as props, I presume to be a temporary arrangement, since they are both second row forwards by inclination and ability. Or is it? Alan Townsend's retirement from premier Rugby creates a very wide gap in the Gloucester first team and this position could be a problem.

For a first run under proper playing conditions, the new laws were apparently interpreted coherently on Saturday evening, though I'm a little worried about the tendency to stick to the old line-out system of having all the forwards up for the throw-in.

However skipper Mickie Booth has already gone on record as saying that the first half dozen matches will in effect be "trials" and perhaps this cautious beginning was, after all, for the best.

Scorers: Lascelles for Waterloo, a penalty. Hopson and Rutherford for Gloucester, two drop-goals with a splendid long place goal from Gloucester's brightest hope this season.

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER

D. Rutherford; N. Foice, J. Bayliss, J. Vallender, A. Osman, T. Hopson, M. Booth (capt.), A. Brinn, M. Nicholls, B. Hudson, R. Long, H. Symonds, P. Ford, D. Owen. R. Smith.

WATERLOO

J. Lascelles; C. Brennand, A. Jackson, D. Ibison, D. Lloyd-Jones; B. Smith, W. French; R. Bond, D. Jones, B. Calvert, P. Jennings, P. M. Kenworthy, B. Mason, J. H. R. Greenwood (capt.), A. Ashcroft.