

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1964

TREMENDOUS EFFORT BY GLO'STER

SO NEAR TO A DRAW AT CARDIFF

CARDIFF 16 Pts., GLOUCESTER 9 Pts.

Gloucester nipped a legend in the bud at Arms Park last night when – with a tremendously disciplined, tense and taut performance – they prevented a successful side from earning the title 'invincible.'

Gloucester may not have won, but they certainly made a team which had, at the outset of this thrilling match, rattled up 193 points in only six games, seem like an ordinarily efficient first class side.

There was little of the much vaunted new Golden Age of Cardiff Rugby visible after Gloucester's coolly effective pack had got the measure of their Welsh opponents. For it was the Gloucester eight which shone as they have out-shone so far this season.

Initially it looked as if the excellent Cardiff half-back combination of McCarthy and Hullin was going to run rings round Gloucester. Indeed scrum-half Hullin had remarkable thrust and ran beautifully with the ball, making many early individual breaks which found gaps in the Gloucester defence.

RAIDS SMOTHERED

Then gradually the Gloucester back row of Dick Smith, Peter Ford and Dave Owen began to smother these attacking moves. Ford eventually had Hullin bottled up and meanwhile the second row men, Roy Long and Hal Symonds – not to mention Alan Brinn and Brian Hudson – were perfecting a technique for outwitting the Welshmen in the line-outs.

So that in the second half, the game was territorially Gloucester's; the possession of territory originating from fast efficient groundwork by the pack.

In the set scrums Mike Nicholls out-hooked W. J. Thomas and the lanky front rank of Brinn and Hudson propped better than they have ever propped for Gloucester.

Wing three-quarter, J. H. Williams scored the opening try for Cardiff after a 67 yard run from well inside his own half. Full-back Drew converted it.

TENACIOUS SPOILING

In the next 10 minutes Gloucester withstood plenty of Welsh attacks, the forwards tackling well and, one notes with particular pleasure, the centres Vallender and Bayliss ruining many Welsh three-quarter moves with tenacious spoiling moves.

Then after he had several times augmented the Gloucester threes with fast runs in open moves, Don Rutherford seized on Gloucester's first chance of scoring with both hands – as he carefully placed the ball 45 yards from the posts for a penalty kick.

He scored with a beautiful kick and a minute later further impressed the expert Welsh crowd with a courageous shoulder charge to bring down the giant Cardiff prop, Norris in full-flight.

The next score followed a heel against the head by Nicholls. Booth got possession – he had to be quick against the fast Welsh back row – and after a change of mind in mid-run he decided he now had room to take a pot shot at the posts.

He scored and Gloucester trailed only two points at the interval when Cardiff had eight points.

On reputation the home side were supposed to have amassed at least 25 points by this time.

I remarked to a Cardiff supporter that Gloucester now seemed to have Cardiff worried, "Not really," he said patronisingly. And reminded me that the home team had now reached its double century.

Indeed, if Rutherford's tragically good drop kick had not struck the Cardiff right hand upright shortly after the resumption, Gloucester would have been in the lead and the story might have been quite different.

Then Booth was penalised for trying to hack the ball out of Cardiff's possession in a set scrum. Drew kicked the penalty points.

HALF SMOTHERED

And when Elwyn Williams scored a try it was against the run of play. Gloucester's defence was well up in advance when a kick ahead by Cardiff was only half smothered by Rutherford,

McCarthy scooped it up and passed to Williams (one of Bleddyn's brothers) at wing forward who went over for Drew to convert.

At his third attempt Gloucester fly-half Terry Hopson dropped a goal.

This was not all the Hopson story, however. He was in attacking vein last night and when he was not forming a well-nigh faultless link between the ever reliable Booth and the centres, he was kicking very well indeed for touch.

This is not nearly a clear enough picture of the tremendous guts of Gloucester's fight – there was always the determination to break through by the extremely powerful pack, their ability to take line-outs at will, their tendency to barge through the Cardiff eight and to lay firm foundations for the many threequarter moves.

DISCIPLINED

It was a disciplined performance which merited a far closer finish to the match. With luck and the consideration of a couple of pauses in the whistle when the referee could have played the advantage rule, Gloucester could have scored two tries. Once Vallender steadied a fast pass when Gloucester were, I believe, two men over. Both Rutherford and Smith had joined the threes. And Mr. Lewis's edgy whistle shrilled. And once, when Gloucester were on the very brink of a try set up by successful line-work by Booth and the forwards, he spotted an off side with Booth a yard from the Cardiff line.

This may sound like excuses offered by a typical local Rugby supporter. Believe me Gloucester don't need excuses. To offer them would be undignified in view of last night's tremendous performance.

What they needed was luck.

THE TEAMS

Cardiff: A. Drew; J. H. Williams, W. Raybould, A. D. Williams, R. A. Willis; T. McCarthy, W. Hullin; C. H. Norris (capt.), W. J. Thomas, A. R. Pender, J. Mills, W. G. Davies, E. Williams, C. Howe, C. Jones.

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

Referee: E. M. Lewis (Abertillery).