

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1964

SPEED AND YOUTH TOO MUCH FOR GLOUCESTER

WELSHMEN HAVE EDGE IN TOUGH, OPEN GAME

PONTYPOOL 13 Pts., GLOUCESTER 8 Pts.

Gloucester lost this match to a faster, younger team, a collection of backs all of whom could run yards faster than most of the visiting men behind the scrum.

Nevertheless they lost honourably for they pulled up from an eight points deficit which Pontypool scored in the last few minutes of an exciting and altogether satisfying match, to an interval of 8-5.

Pontypool certainly seem able to put their hands on useful players when they are pushed.

They lost full-back Ray Cheney who was one of the best in Wales and have now acquired a former wing threequarter, Lawrie Daniels who has a stupefying turn of speed and a fine all-round ability, to replace him.

In addition their captain Fenton Coles was injured last night and an unknown youngster called Geoff Jones came into his wing threequarter place to score Pontypool's two tries.

SLUGGISH START

Both of these were converted by Daniels whose fielding and kicking throughout left little to be desired. Daniels also scored Pontypool's single penalty goal.

After Geoff Jones' try in the 13th minute Gloucester, who had seemed a little slow hitherto settled down to something like their normal unruffled game with snappier passing than was evident at the outset.

Peter Ford made Gloucester's recovery try when he charged down a stinging kick by Ray Watkins, the Pontypool outside half.

He followed up the ball which was headed for touch and left-footed it into the centre, soccer style, for the rest of the back row to make what they could of it.

HOPSON'S BEST

Open side forward Dick Smith picked up on the run and lock Dave Owen went over from Smith's pass for a try near the posts.

Rutherford converted easily.

Fly-half Terry Hopson put in his best run of the season – a fine 30-yard sprint which left even the Welsh backs gasping but Bayliss to whom he passed was not marked.

He had a smack at a tremendously long drop-goal which – had it been just a shade closer to the target would have been a great kick.

MORE POSSESSION

In the meantime the Gloucester pack were beginning to get more possession. But no further score came from the Cherry and Whites until the second half, and the teams crossed with the score at 8–5.

Shortly after the resumption Rutherford gathered just inside his own half and sent Hopkins on a run towards the wing.

The Gloucester fly-half found winger Nick Foice who switched direction inside, through a gap in the Pontypool defence and sent an inside pass to Ford.

Ford made certain of a try after a run of 25 yards. Pontypool's vociferous supporters did not like this a bit and there were speculative mumblings about someone having – unbeknown to the touch judge and the referee – put a foot into touch during the move. I was quite satisfied that no such thing had happened.

RUTHERFORD UNLUCKY

But I'll say this for the Pontypool crowd they kept quiet for Rutherford's unlucky kick. The ball went high and beautifully straight and at the last second curled out so that the scores were now level.

Geoff Jones' second try was a scrambling effort, a touchdown he just managed to get to, near the posts. For Daniels the conversion was easy.

In the second half though Gloucester's forwards were doing particularly well in the line-outs and the backs had possession almost at will.

Booth was enjoying himself, playing to the pack – which, considering the greater speed of the Welsh backs, was the wisest tactical decision he made.

And there was many an appreciative round of applause for his snappy retrieving and kicking "to" (rather than "for") touch.

But finally it was speed which beat Gloucester. Both Hopson and Rutherford were caught by tackles from behind.

And this I think is a fair indication of Welsh speed and enthusiasm. For neither of these Gloucester players – who otherwise played excellently – hang about when they get possession.

It was a fine hard game of Rugby.

THE TEAMS

PONTYPOOL: L. Daniells; I. Jones, B. Jones, M. Cooper, N. Williams; R. Watkins, J. Ellis; M. Powell, H. Taylor, P. Diez, R. Addison, M. Panter, E. Jones, M. Leighton, M. Stiff.

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

Referee: Mr. R. C. Richards (Cross Keys).

JC