

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1964

GLOUCESTER FIRE EARNS 'MATCH OF SEASON' WIN

GLOUCESTER 19 Pts., HARLEQUINS 16 Pts.

It was not just the 35 points which made this the best Kingsholm match of the season – it was the sight of Gloucester, tipped to lose by the pundits, producing the kind of controlled fire which it was impossible to extinguish.

From the outset the "Cherry and Whites" had Harlequins on the wrong foot, making a very distinguished club side fight for the initiative which deserted them until their last thrilling rally when they scored two goals and looked as if, given more time, they must surely overwhelm Gloucester.

Initially it was very determined tackling, smothering the 'Quins' attacking moves before they could get off the ground, which rattled the visitors, who were plainly a good deal faster than Gloucester behind the scrum.

OUTSTANDING

In the very entertaining loose mauls Gloucester had a fine taut control over the game, the kind of discipline which suggests fitness and experience.

Roy Long played an outstanding game. His line-out jumping was the most precise to be seen at Kingsholm this season and it was frequently Long who emerged from the heated mauls in possession and running and passing well.

Gloucester seized the initiative immediately after Don Rutherford, who turned in a peerless performance at full-back, conceded nothing and sending up beautifully curling touch-finders sometimes half the length of the field, had kicked a long penalty kick.

After this there was no holding them despite an almost immediate reply by Rutherford's opposite number, Hiller.

We saw Ainge at fly-half making a really great break through the centre; we saw tremendous tackling by the Gloucester backs, in particular Bayliss and Pitt; we saw a kind of play from Mickie Booth at scrum-half that he has not displayed so far this season to such an extent and we saw Peter Ford, Dick Smith and Brian Hudson all taking part in open moves.

DETERMINATION

It is difficult to define the appeal of the game. There are some rugby matches which are set alight early on and continue to glow and crackle right up to the last minute. This was one and it was Gloucester, timing passes and tackles and interceptions and ball-bounces extremely well which provided the fuel. Perhaps most important was that they were determined to hang on to their ground record.

Ainge kicked a 35 yard drop goal and Gloucester changed ends with a three point lead. This was increased by Dick Smith who crossed for a try after Hudson, running in possession and Ford, who gave Smith the pass, had taken the ball from the half way line.

Rutherford converted this from in front of the new posts and later kicked a 40 yard penalty.

The Cherry and Whites now led by 11 points and looked invincible.

Forward much of the good work was being done by Ken Taylor, at hooker, who is always a useful dribbler from a line-out maul.

GRAND RALLY

Lloyd, the 'Quins centre, scored a try and almost immediately Hudson replied with another which Rutherford again converted. At this stage Gloucester were leading by 19pts. to six and there had been hardly a murmur from 'Quins.

Indeed, one had seen their threes passing the ball, either on the retreat or without gaining ground, so often that one began to wonder if they had acquired their reputation undeservedly.

Then wing forward Hancock went over for a try when Gloucester's buoyant defence was caught up in an attacking position and Hiller converted.

Hiller then squeezed over for a try by the corner flag and converted it himself.

Ten points in the closing minutes of a hard, hard game was a wonderful bonus but Gloucester supporters' hearts must have been in their mouths.

I don't know where 'Quins found the energy but they showed in those dying minutes that even after 90 minutes of bone-crushing tackles and hard full-out running they still had the edge over Gloucester for speed – if not for all-round determination and forward competence.

UNITED WORTHY WINNERS

NEWPORT HSOB 6 PTS.
GLOUCESTER UTD. 14 PTS.[sic]

Gloucester United failed to cross the home line; yet so superior were they over Newport High School Old Boys that their margin of victory by no means flattered them.

The experience of Terry Hopson at outside half played a large part in the United success; so, too, did the dominance of their pack, where Tom Sparey and Bob Timms gave outstanding performances in the loose exchanges.

The home defence was often under heavy pressure against United's strong attacks; and when Old Boys launched counter-attacks they were invariably driven back by the accurate touch kicking of Hopson and full back Mick Tocknell.

Hopson dropped two goals and Tocknell one, while Tom Sparey added two penalty goals to give United their comfortable win.

JC