

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1964

LACK OF ADVENTURE BEAT GLO'STER

ABERAVON 18 Pts., GLOUCESTER 8 Pts.

The Wizards' staunchest supporters would hardly call Gloucester's 10 points deficit at the end of an exciting second half a fair indication of the way the Cherry and Whites' fortunes waned.

For Gloucester were in the ascendancy both on points and from a territorial point of view in the first half. It was a drop-goal, taken with the appearance of plenty of time to spare, by David Ainge which inspired Gloucester to tremendous forward efforts after ten minutes.

And, although there were still 70 gruelling minutes to go, Gloucester's disciplined pack did seem to be dictating the pattern of play.

SAFE RUTHEFORD

Led by Peter Ford at his most energetic, inspired by good work in the loose by Dave Owen, Dick Smith and Hal Symonds – not to mention Brian Hudson whose tackling was as lusty as ever, the Gloucester eight successfully smothered attacks likely to start from the set pieces via the Aberavon halves.

Ron Pitt and John Bayliss were ruthlessly efficient defenders as was Ainge. Booth kept the pack on the move and Don Rutherford caught one or two beauties over his shoulder on the run which brought applause from 3,000 men of Aberavon.

But, apart from one or two runs by Bayliss – one of which completely wrong-footed the opposition and led to a fine try which he scored near the corner flag for Rutherford to convert with a truly fine kick from the touchline, there was absolutely no imagination in Gloucester's play.

OUT OF TOUCH

It was as if they were all taking a day off from thinking about Rugby tactics and were relying on the basic conventions which youngsters should master at school.

Nick Foice looked hard to stop admittedly and Bayliss tried to infuse a few ideas into the threequarter play with dummy-runs but none of the threes played in attack as if the others existed.

There was no feeling of rhythm of sympathy between them and these are feelings which they can project to the customers in the stand when the ball, as they say, is bouncing right and there's the kind of bite in the game which one noticed in the grand spectacle they provided when the Harlequins came to Kingsholm a few weeks ago.

Neither did Gloucester appear able to take advantage of the dreadful handling errors which Aberavon committed in the first half.

After the interval, Gloucester's pack continued to get its share of the line-out possession but gradually Roger Michaelson's splendid pack leadership took its toll and the young, fit and fast Aberavon backs began to show up Gloucester's light cavalry as very "conventional forces" and not so light either.

The play became much more interesting after the interval when Aberavon scored a try – Thomas went over for Derek Jones to convert it.

A few minutes after Gloucester regained the lead with the Bayliss-Rutherford goal and later still Omri Jones, Roberts and Morgan scored tries – one converted by skipper Michaelson from the touchline.

So a dull game ended in a flurry of scoring by a faster and more adventurous team.

GLOOMY DRAW

GLOUCESTER UNITED 3 Pts.

BARGOED 3 Pts.

There is something clearly wrong when you have to strain your eyes to see the players – never mind the ball.

This was a game United could have won. Indeed, in some people's estimation, the DID win.

Just before the end, Peter Hawker thundered out of the gloom to go over in the corner.

The referee said 'no.' Bargoed breathed once again, and the game teetered on to the final whistle.

MORE INTERESTING

The first half, on the whole, had been rather more interesting.

In it, Peter Hawker scored Gloucester's try, while his opposite number – Trevor Le. . .s – kicked a penalty for the visitors.

Both sides covered a lot of ground in the second half, in hope, no doubt, of a clinching score.

Gloucester crossed the visitors' line twice, but were pulled back each time.

Did someone murmur: "We wuz robbed" ?