

How **The Citizen** reported the big games...

Dateline: Sat April 15, 1978 + + + John Player Cup final + + + Gloucester 6 Leicester 3 + + +

Mogg the hero in tense win

UNDER-23 international wing Richard Mogg was both match-winner and saver in Gloucester's John Player Cup final triumph over Leicester, before a record crowd at Twickenham.

Mogg, 22 last February, was the toast of 12,000 Gloucester supporters when he broke through two tackles and crashed over for the victory try after 36 minutes.

But his superb cover tackle on Bob Barker in the closing minutes of the match was almost as vital. Leicester's backs exploited an over-

lap to give Barker his chance, but Mogg suddenly appeared to stop him in his tracks.

That was the Tigers' last roar, and Gloucester had won their second final in six years.

Anyone who expected the rugby to match the glorious spring sunshine was bound to be disappointed. Yet it had all the atmosphere and excitement of the cup, with close marking, total commitment and the pressure game replacing the fast, open stuff of which men dream.

And although they might have scored more points, the result reflected Gloucester's superiority. Victory might also have gone the

other way, for full back Dusty Hare should have converted more than a solitary penalty goal.

Gloucester, the wind behind them, set off at a tremendous pace and had most of the first half territorial advantage. Only a series of penalties by Hare – easily Leicester's most outstanding player, despite his kicking failures – kept the Cherry and Whites at bay.

Gloucester must have been frustrated by the number of penalties – 15-4 in the match awarded against them by referee Roger Quittenton.

Hare had two 50-yard chances before the interval, one of which went perilously close, and Peter Butler recovered from an early injury to see a huge penalty from inside his own half fade just beneath the crossbar.

Gloucester's pack won a tremendous amount of possession and Leicester eventually cracked for the only time in the game.

Scrum-half Steve Kenney failed to find Belldyn Jones and, despite midfield covering by John Duggan, the Gloucester forward pounced.

They won the ball from a maul, attacked on the right through Gordon Sargent and Mike Burton, but suddenly switched to the left. The ball moved via John Simonett, Paul Howell, Chris Williams and Steve Boyle to the powerful Mogg, who touched down in the corner with three defenders clinging to him.

Peter Butler's conversion was a magnificent effort from the touchline.

The score was 6-0 after a first half in which there was much tactical kicking, not all of it sufficiently accurate to be effective.

Leicester came into it after the interval and, although he missed a



■ **EYES DOWN:** A clutch of players are ready to pounce as the ball runs loose



■ **PARTY TIME:** The jubilant Gloucester players with John Player Cup

comparatively easy penalty, Hare landed consolation points from 35 yards.

The Tigers' backs, including skipper Brian Hall, were at their most effective now, but Gloucester's defence held firm.

In the exciting closing minutes, Bob Clewes almost got over in the corner, and then Mogg halted Barker to frustrate Leicester's last scoring chance.

Gloucester's front row – Gordon Sargent, Steve Mills and Mike Burton – were the formulation of their

win and Mills took three strikes against the head off England's Peter Wheeler.

John Fidler, John Simonett and Steve Boyle were a successful line-out combination, although they achieved less possession in the second half when Nick Joyce came much more into the picture for Leicester. And there was some outstanding back row covering from skipper John Watkins and Viv Woolley. Centres Brian Vine and Richard Jardine also got through some magnificent defensive work.

Dateline: Sat May 1, 1982 + + + John Player Cup final + + + Gloucester 12 Moseley 12 (aet) + + +

Sheer murder for the committed

GLoucester, the outstanding English team this season, begin their South African campaign today as joint champions after this exciting, but ultimately inconclusive, cup final.

The sides could not be separated after two hours of all-out effort and the John Player Cup will be shared between the Reddings and Kingsholm for six months or so.

Most of the excitement stemmed not from quality rugby, but from total commitment, fierce tackling and a fluctuating scoreline, with neither side able to build up a decisive lead.

The after-match atmosphere in the Gloucester dressing room was a mixture of relief, exhaustion and disappointment that the season's ultimate prize had just eluded them. The major disappointment for

Gloucester was that they were unable to dominate the forward exchanges in the manner which has characterised their entire season.

The Cherry and Whites just had the edge in the tight, Moseley shaded the line-outs and the tremendous work of both back rows cancelled out any second phase advantage.

Gloucester captain Steve Mills said: "We are disappointed that we could not win. It was a good, hard cup performance with some very satisfactory defence from both sides."

Moseley skipper Derek Nutt was also happy to accept the outcome. "I don't think a draw is very satisfactory, but it is better that the cup is shared rather than anyone losing it on a drop-goal rule or something like that.

"Both sides neutralised each

other, so it's fitting that we should share it."

Neither team looked like scoring a try, with too many handling errors, unproductive kicking and tremendous tackling and coverage keeping chances to an absolute minimum. Moseley twice gave winger Richard Lawson room on the left, but first Paul Taylor and then Mike Teague brought off try-saving tackles.

Too often both sides' tactical kicking was not accurate enough and the strong wind blowing from the north stand did not help.

The most impressive unit on the field was the Gloucester back row – the source of so many good things this season.

Their support work and grafting for the loose ball was of the highest class. But there was misfortune for

Mike Longstaff, who limped off in the second half.

It looked as if the gamble of playing the 27-year-old flanker had failed with the re-appearance of his left knee injury. But he said afterwards: "There is nothing wrong with the knee at all. It was the calf muscle. I took a bad knock but stayed on for a bit in case anyone else got hurt, then came off."

Paul Wood was his replacement and, with his quickfire running, certainly played his part – as did prop Gordon Sargent, a half-time replacement for Malcolm Preedy, who suffered a back strain.

Two penalties by Paul Ford – who impressed with his calm authority at the back – had Gloucester ahead at half-time.

Moseley clawed back when Mike

Perry responded with two of the same inside 20 minutes, but Ford's third effort was beginning to look at the match-winner as time ticked away. Then, with two minutes left, Perry took the final into extra time for the first time in its 11-year history.

Those extra 20 minutes were sheer murder for the committed and it looked all up for Gloucester with Perry's superb drop goal.

Gloucester responded with some of their most fluent rugby and it was fitting that a Ford penalty should bounce over from an upright to save the day.

For Gloucester, the biggest encouragement came from the performance of their youngsters who refused to be overawed by the occasion. This augurs well for the future of Kingsholm.