

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. SWANSEA.

The annual visit of the Welsh Champions to Kingsholm is always a popular attraction, and to-day's fixture drew a very large crowd to the City Club's enclosure. The Gloucester team which defeated Bristol underwent several changes. Stephens re-appeared at half-back, Wood went full-back, E. Hall took his place in the three-quarter line, and Parham coming in at forward. These alterations as a whole were considered as strengthening the side, and after Swansea's moderate form against Bridgend and Neath, there were great hopes of Gloucester coming out on top this afternoon. An excursion from Swansea brought a fairly good contingent of the Champion's supporters. The weather was favourable, and the ground in splendid condition. The rival teams took the field punctually at 3.30, and the players met with a hearty reception.

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	SWANSEA.
A. E. Wood	Backs.	J. Bancroft
C. Smith	Three-quarter	F. Gordon (capt.)
E. Hall	backs.	* D. Rees
J. Harrison	"	* W. Arnold
A. Hudson	"	L. Jenkins
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	* R. M. Owen
J. Stephens	"	* W. Trew
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	* W. Joseph
A. Hawker	"	* W. Parker
B. Parham	"	* F. Scrine
G. Vears	"	* D. J. Thomas
G. Matthews	"	A. Smith
F. Pegler	"	W. Cole
H. Collins	"	H. Hunt
J. Jewell	"	D. Davies
		* Internationals

Referee : Mr. J. Milburn (Bristol).

THE GAME.

The Gloucester captain won the toss, and Joseph kicked off for the visitors from the Worcester-street goal. The ball went to Wood under the posts, but the City custodian put in a huge punt to the centre, and Trew failing to field the ball went into touch.

Gloucester were penalised in the first scrum, and Swansea gained 20 yards with the resultant kick. Gloucester worked back, and then an exchange of kicks gave Swansea a slight advantage. The visitors heeling, Owen and Trew tried to break away, but they were stopped. Immediately after the visiting backs were off again, and Gordon put in a short punt, but it did not gain much ground. The ball eventually rebounded to Wood in some loose kicking, and with a fine punt he found touch beyond the centre.

Even play followed at mid-field until Gloucester got away to the Swansea end, where the visitors were penalised. Wood took a shot for goal, but the ball went wide to Gordon, who punted out. Stephens received and kicked across, but Swansea saved a dangerous situation.

Gloucester were playing grandly now, and Gent opened out the game, but Harrison was tackled in trying to cut inside. Next Hudson and Parham combined in some pretty work, and the Swansea defence was sorely tried. The Swansea forwards wheeling they tried hard to break away, but they lost the ball, and the City dribbled back to the 25-line.

Play was terribly fast and in favour of Gloucester, but Trew at length got in a clever kick to touch, gaining a dozen yards or so. The Swansea half-backs further improved matters for their side, and Trew kicked to Wood, who was closely pressed. The City custodian, however, took the ball beautifully, and with a left-foot kick sent to touch in grand style. Operations were still confined to the Swansea quarter, but Owen getting possession started a bout of passing. Gordon received, and though upset by Smith managed to pass to Rees, who punted down the field.

Tricky work by the Swansea backs was well followed up, but Wood marked splendidly, and got in a fine kick. The Swansea forwards, however, were beating the home men for possession, and a passing bout took the game to the home half. The City forwards changed the venue quickly, and then Stephens with a clever punt found touch near the Swansea 25.

Good work by the Gloucester men in a line-out was well followed up by Hudson, who tried hard to break through. The Swansea defence was very safe, but a great burst by the City front rank nearly ended in a score, the ball just going into touch-in-goal out of Parham's reach.

Swansea dropped out, and the game was contested at a terrific pace. Swansea gained an advantage in exchange kicking chiefly through the agency of Bancroft, but a brilliant burst by the Gloucester forwards, headed by Matthews, forced Trew to throw the ball to touch to save.

Hall was prominent with some neat work for Gloucester, and then a passing bout initiated by Gent saw the City with a fine opening. Hall cross-kicked in front of goal, and Parham being placed on-side he jumped and took the ball. He, however, unfortunately fell when only a pass out would have ended in a score.

Swansea worked out of danger, but Wood with a magnificent kick sent them back right to their line, where some hot work was witnessed. Swansea here got penalised, and Wood made a splendid shot for goal, the ball just going wide of the post.

On the restart Swansea tried passing, and a kick by Trew went to Hudson, who handed back to Wood. The latter, though hampered, managed to get in his kick, and Bancroft's return being charged down play was taken to the centre. Swansea came back with a loose rush, and Owen making a mark from a line-out Bancroft took a shot at goal. His kick fell short, and Wood punted out to the centre of the field, where a Swansea forward secured and raced across the ground, but the sub-sequent attack failed.

Still, the effort led to a serious assault on the home line, and the ball getting among the Swansea backs it looked all over for a score. Hudson, however, rushed in and smothered Rees in fine style. Swansea, however, immediately got back to the home line, and the City defenders had a severe task to keep them out. Faulty passing by the Swansea rear division lost the visitors ground. For an infringement by Gent Gloucester were penalised, but Bancroft's kick at goal was again a failure.

On the resumption Gloucester, aided by good kicks by Wood and Hall, found a footing in the Swansea quarters. Here Collins, from a throw-out, burst away, but he was stopped before getting clear. Some exciting forward play ensued in the visitors' half, in which little advantage accrued to either side. Then Gent opened up the game, but Hudson passed badly and the movement was checked. For a bad foul of Hudson by Jenkins the visitors were penalised, but nothing definite resulted from the kick. Immediately after half-time was called.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucester Nil
Swansea Nil

Gloucester started the second half, and a series of exchange kicks left the game inside the home half. Heeling by the Swansea forwards saw Owen feed Trew, and the latter punted down past Wood. The latter only fielded right on the line, and being closely pressed was forced out of bounds.

A scrum followed five yards out, and Owen securing passed to Trew. The latter apparently knocked the ball over the line near the corner and touched down. There was a consultation between the touch-judge ending in Swansea being awarded a try, but the place-kick failed.

Gloucester dropped out, but some City players getting in front of the ball a scrum was ordered on the 25. Swansea got very close to the home line, where a City player put in a silly kick. Wood, however, saved a very dangerous position.

Gloucester were hotly pressed for a couple of minutes, but an infringement by Swansea led to a free kick to Gloucester, and the much-needed relief followed. Following this marks fell to either side, and the final result saw the Gloucester forwards collar Trew and rush away, but Bancroft checked the movement.

Some exciting play immediately followed, and E. Hall, for kicking Owen, was ordered off the field. Pegler came out three-quarter and play was continued with even more vigour than before. From a subsequent scrum Gent got away and passed to Pegler, who cross-kicked cleverly for Parham to field and throw out a wide pass to Hudson. The wing man had to wait for the ball, but once in possession he went desperately for the line, but was cut off a few yards outside.

Gloucester now worked hard to get on terms, and one effort looked likely to be successful, but the attack lacked finish. With a big effort Swansea relieved, and in some hot work at mid-field Hunt struck at a Gloucester forward and was ordered off.

With the teams level as regards numbers the players entered into the contest with great keenness. Gloucester heeled, and the City backs handled smartly, Harrison kicking down in the hope of Hudson getting up. Bancroft, however, got across in time and put in a splendid kick. Gloucester were doing better just now, and twice Rees was called upon to check dangerous bursts. This he did effectually, and the game was kept outside the 25 line.

Hudson was conspicuous for a couple of splendid tackles which prevented Swansea breaking away, and on the Swansea side Bancroft put in one marvellous save when things looked ugly for the visitors. A wild pass by Hudson and a mis-kick by Harrison, lost Gloucester a good slice of ground, and mid-field was the scene of operations for the next few minutes.

At length Gloucester got set going, and by desperate efforts the City reached the Welshmen's line. Smith worked splendidly in the centre, and tried hard to break through, but he could not find an opening.

Stephens, with a kick, put Gloucester right on the Swansea line, and there was great excitement. The position, however, was lost by faulty play behind. In the concluding stages Gloucester attacked vigorously, but all efforts to pierce the defence failed, and Swansea retired victors by 3 points to nil.

RESULT :

Swansea 1 try (3 points)
Gloucester Nil

Swansea saved their record, but only after one of the stoutest contests witnessed at Kingsholm for a long time. The winning try savoured very much of the doubtful, for not only was the ball apparently knocked on, but the Gloucester players alleged it went to touch. However, the referee's decision went against the home team, but only after consultation with the visiting touch-judge.

Of the game it must be confessed it fell considerably short of the standard expected. At no period did Swansea approach the wonderful form of past years, the back play especially being sadly at fault. For the first twenty minutes Gloucester held the upper hand, and one or two chances that came their way ought to have been turned to better account. But the City players, like their opponents, were lacking in finish and resource when scoring opportunities presented themselves.

The game was fought out with desperate keenness, but it was not until after Swansea scored that the play degenerated into anything questionable. Then players on both sides lost their heads, and the tackling was often unnecessarily rough.

The incident which led to E. Hall being ordered off was greatly to be regretted, for the Gloucester centre is one of the quietest and best behaved players to be met with on the football field. That Hall, in the heat of the moment, did kick Owen is not disputed, but in justice to the Gloucesterian it should be stated that he asserts the Welsh International half-back kicked him first. The referee, unfortunately, did not see this, or no doubt Owen would also have received marching orders.

From this point the players grew more reckless, and it was not long ere Hunt was seen in a fighting attitude. The referee promptly ordered the Swansea forward to the ropes, and this action went a long way towards bringing the players to reason.

The last ten minutes provided numerous exciting passages, and Gloucester struggled desperately to get on terms. Once or twice the Swansea citadel appeared bound to fall, but the defence prevailed, Bancroft doing great things in saving.

On the whole the play, judged from a scientific standpoint, was disappointing, and both teams have been seen to far better advantage. Gloucester certainly started well, and the manner in which they confined operations to their opponents' end raised the hopes of their supporters to the highest point. There was, however, always something wanting at the critical moment. When Swansea once took up the attack they gave the City many an anxious moment, and until towards the end the Welshmen never looked back.

After Trew scored Swansea often played for safety, kicking to touch, when in many instances an attacking movement might easily have been developed, was frequently resorted to. Trew was extremely clever in these tactics, and no doubt Swansea owed a lot to him for the victory secured.

Forward, Gloucester generally were beaten in the scrums, but in the loose play and lines-out there was not much to choose between the rival packs. The City men, however, heeled a sufficient number of times to give the backs a chance, but the home rear division was by no means satisfactory. There were few attempts to cut up the field, and the handling was wild and uncertain, with the result that the Swansea defenders had no great difficulty in warding off all attacks from this quarter. In the centre Hall put in some good work, but Harrison was not so prominent as usual.

On the wings Smith was sound, and Hudson, apart from his handling, made the best use of the opportunities which came his way. There was a battle royal at half-back between Gent and Owen, but the latter, better served by his forwards, held a slight advantage. Stephens rendered very useful aid at times, but he has been seen to better advantage. Trew was a success at outside half for Swansea, and was the best man on the side. The visitors' third line was by no means the brilliant combination of past seasons, and they allowed a number of openings to go astray.

Undoubtedly the feature of the game was the magnificent play of Bancroft and Wood at full-back. Both players had a severe ordeal to go through, but they emerged with distinct credit. Wood kicked with splendid judgment, made no mistake in fielding, and was all round a great success. The same may be said of Bancroft, who fully sustained the reputation of his famous brother.