

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. SWANSEA.

CITY TEAM AT ST. HELENS.

CLOSE SHAVE FOR THE ALL WHITES' RECORD.

CITIZENS DEFEATED BY A DROPPED GOAL

AFTER A GALLANT FIGHT.

After a brilliant run of successes at home, Gloucester made the journey to Swansea to-day to meet the undefeated Welsh champions.

Gloucester, though often victorious over Swansea on their own ground, have never beaten the All Whites at St. Helens, the nearest approach being a drawn game in 1894-5. In this respect, however, the City are only one of many clubs, for in six years Swansea have only twice had to acknowledge defeat at home.

Usually when journeying into Wales Gloucester have been seriously handicapped as regards players, but for to-day's great match the City were able to command the services of their regular fifteen, and this fact was encouraging to the visitors, who were confidently expected to give their famous opponents a good game.

Swansea had a record to maintain, for to-date they had successfully maintained their unbeaten certificate against all comers. Since the clubs met last October, when Gloucester were beaten by a solitary try, both teams have undergone alteration. L. Vears, T. Leonard, F. Goulding, G. H. Smith, and F. Oswald have dropped out of the City fifteen, whilst Gordon, Arnold, and Jones were missing from the ranks of Swansea.

Gloucester travelled by the 9.30 newspaper train, but a five hours' railway journey was hardly a fit preparation for so important a match.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	SWANSEA.
G. Romans	Backs.	J. Bancroft
C. Smith	Three-quarter	* F. Jowett
E. Hall	backs.	* G. Davies
J. Harrison	"	* D. Rees
A. Hudson	"	* W. Trew
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	* R. M. Owen
J. Stephens	"	L. Jenkins
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	* W. Parker
B. Parham	"	* F. Scrinnes
A. Hawker	"	* D. J. Thomas
F. Pegler	"	H. Hunt
J. Jewell	"	D. Davies (Mumbles)
G. Matthews	"	A. Smith
G. Vears	"	W. Cole
H. Quixley	"	D. Davies (Port Tennant)

* Internationals.

The weather was gloriously fine, and there were about 6,000 spectators present when Hawker started for Gloucester. From the first scrum Swansea heeled, and big kicking sent the ball to touch inside the home 25. The visitors quickly relieved, Hudson smothering Rees near the centre. Clever play by the Welshmen took them back, and Trew forced a minor from a fruitless drop at goal.

On the re-start Bancroft fumbled, but Jewell knocked on when there was a possible opening. The Swansea forwards continued to heel, but Gent effected a grand tackle on Jowett when he looked likely to clear.

A couple of penalties against Gloucester kept the game in the City 25, but so far play had been very tame. Swansea were repeatedly getting possession and heeling, but the passing was wretched and ground in most instances lost.

Gloucester at length changed the venue by the aid of a penalty, and a good forward burst took operations beyond the centre. Here Gent fed Stephens smartly, but Harrison failed to take his transfer, though he subsequently recovered. Romans cleared cleverly under pressure from Jenkins, and then Hudson, intercepting, burst away, but Rees just tripped him up.

Good passing by Gloucester and a neat dribble by Harrison looked promising, but knocks-on spoiled the movement. From a kick by Jenkins, Romans fumbled on his line, and a scrum followed under the Gloucester posts. Gloucester relieved slightly, but the ball going to George Davies, the latter dropped a clever goal with his left foot.

Resuming, Gloucester showed up strongly, Harrison with a neat run and kick troubling Bancroft. The City had the best of the subsequent exchanges, but up to now they had not shown their true form. Even play followed till Rees got off with a fine dash, only to be nicely upset by Hawker.

For fouling Gent, Owen was penalised, and with the kick Romans found touch beautifully in the Swansea half. Swansea worked out with passing, but Hudson intercepted and brought off a grand dash, but Bancroft upset him on the line – a narrow escape for the home team.

The game livened up considerably now, but Gloucester were holding their own well. Hudson was again prominent with smart work, and ensuing play was fought out keenly at mid-field.

Swansea several times tried passing, but the Gloucester tackling was keen, though Rees was nearly through after a good run. Towards the interval Swansea pressed, but there was no further score before half-time.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Swansea 1 goal (d)
Gloucester Nil

Thomas resumed for Swansea, who early attacked through Trew. Then Owen and Jenkins worked the blind side of the scrum, but the latter was well tackled. The Welshmen, however, were soon aggressive again, and the Gloucester defence was severely tested.

The collaring was grand, "Whacker" Smith being very conspicuous in this department. He injured himself on one occasion in tackling Trew, but was able to resume immediately. Gloucester cleared from their line, Hudson and Hall shining. The latter was charged over by an opposing forward and winded, the game being stopped. Continuing, mistakes by the Gloucester half-backs allowed Swansea to get close, and in a dangerous movement the line was only saved by kicking dead.

Following the drop-out Gloucester showed up with some smart work, but they could not get an opening. Owen, well served by his forwards, got the ball away cleanly, but the Swansea three-quarters were wretchedly weak, and could make no impression.

A breakaway by the Gloucester forwards looked promising, Matthews fielding in the open and running down touch. His pass inside, however, was not accepted, and Swansea saved. The home team worked out of danger, but Gloucester stuck to their opponents splendidly, the forwards doing especially well.

By dint of short rushes and kicks, Swansea reached mid-field, but off-side play lost them a lot of ground. Operations were being fought out in the home 25, when Owen initiated a bout of passing, which ended at the centre. Gloucester immediately rushed back, and with dashing forward work caused the Swansea backs anxiety. George Davies saved once when matters looked very dangerous, but he was temporarily disabled.

On the game being resumed Swansea got off with a good burst, and from a drop at goal by Trew a minor was forced. The drop-out was well followed up by Gloucester, who took the play in hand, and reached the home end. Owen dribbled back finely, Harrison making a daring save when everything pointed to a score.

Soon afterwards Gloucester had to concede another minor, the ball going dead from a kick over the line. George Davies now retired, and Swansea finished the game without him.

The Welshmen worked desperately in the last five minutes to effect a score, but they were met with superb defence, and all the passing movements came to naught. Just on time Owen attempted to get round on the blind side, but he was stopped, and another movement just after was effectively checked.

RESULT :

Swansea 1 goal (d) (4 points)
Gloucester Nil

REMARKS.

Swansea preserved their record, but it was a close shave, and the team and supporters appeared thankful when the game was over. The game on the whole was a big disappointment. The Swansea backs especially gave a sorry exhibition, and Gloucester had no great difficulty in bottling up all their movements. The defence was the chief feature of the City men's play, and they have never performed better in Wales.

Forward Swansea were continually heeling, and with half the chances Gloucester would have put on a big score. Gent worried Owen a good deal, and Stephens also did a lot of smothering, but they had few opportunities of opening out the game. Gloucester had one real chance, when Hudson intercepted, but he just failed to beat Bancroft with only a few yards to go.

Romans, except the one mistake, played a fine game, and kicked a splendid length. The three-quarters did everything that was required of them, and their close marking no doubt had a lot to do with putting Swansea off their game. Hudson was very effective, and Smith's tackling great.

Of the forwards Matthews, Vears, Pegler, and Hawker were perhaps the pick but they were a good set, and were only beaten in getting possession in the scrum. Gloucester's close fight was a surprise to the Swansea crowd, but with a little luck the City might easily have brought off the great event.

JC