

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. STROUD.

STROUD LEAD AT THE INTERVAL.

A VIGOROUS GAME.

The annual visit of the Gloucester team to Fromehall as usual proved a strong local attraction. The City played full strength with the exception of "Whacker" Smith (who stood down for L. Vears owing to an injured leg), and Stroud fielded short of W. Partridge, who was too unwell to turn out. The teams had already met twice this season, Gloucester proving victorious on both occasions by 18 points to 8, and 13 points to nil respectively. The G.W.R. ran a cheap excursion to Stroud in connection with the match, and the trip was fairly well patronised. The teams were : —

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	STROUD.
G. Romans	Backs.	F. Johnson
L. Vears	Three-quarter	Lewis Smith (capt.)
E. Hall	backs.	W. Hyam
J. Harrison	"	W. Pitt
A. Hudson	"	C. Smith
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	C. Harrington
J. Stephens	"	W. Cull
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	G. H. Smith
B. Parham	"	J. Gough
A. Hawker	"	G. Denley
F. Pegler	"	F. Oswell
J. Jewell	"	C. A. King
G. Matthews	"	Rev. C. V. Lester
G. Vears	"	H. Vickeridge
H. Quixley	"	E. Wheatley

Referee : Mr. NICHOLLS (Leicester).

THE GAME.

The conditions were capital for a fast and open display, though the sun was extremely warm and likely to give the players a trying time before the end of the game.

There was a very good gate when the teams took the field shortly after 3.30, those present giving a hearty cheer. Stroud won the toss, and Hawker started up the slope, the forwards dribbling to Cull at the home 25. Cull kicked nicely, but Lewis Smith missed Vears, who, however, could only shoot poorly to touch.

Harrington secured from his forwards and passed to Cull on the blind side of the scrum. Cull, however, was well looked after, though he kicked to Harrison. The latter sent to touch at the centre. Harrington swept round the scrum and robbed the opposing side, the ball being sent to Hall, who, however, was equal to the emergency.

Shortly Gloucester passed beautifully, but Pitt nicely bottled this up. Gloucester got possession in the scrum, and were heeling, when Gent kicked the oval back. The Stroud forwards then looked like scoring and Gent stopped the movement just in time. Later Hyam shone in an effort, but Romans was perfectly safe and kicked finely. Next Johnson essayed a drop at goal, and a touchdown resulted.

Shortly the home full back, replying to a kick by Gent, who had dribbled splendidly just before, found touch in a capital position in Gloucester's 25. Harrington next secured and kicked prettily under difficulties. Romans conceded another minor.

Stroud continued to have the best of matters, and King, opening up, threw to Hyam, who sent to Romans. That player tried to kick across to touch. C. Smith obtained near the touch-line and ran hard for the line. Romans tried to cut him off, but the Gothamite went over with a beautiful try amidst cheers. Johnson failed at the difficult place.

Gloucester dropped out, and in a line-out at the centre Oswell distinguished himself by securing and sending prettily to touch. Stroud opened up, and the ball went from Pitt to Hyam, who knocked on when there was practically a clear course.

With a big kick up touch by Hall, Gloucester gained the home 25, where Harrison obtained from the halves and ran cleverly. Hyam upset him, but the Gloucesterian released the ball, which was kicked hard over the line, C. Smith conceding a minor.

Stroud dropped out, and following some very exciting play Hudson fouled C. Smith and Gloucester were penalised. In some aggressive play by Stroud a few minutes later, C. Smith was rather roughly handled by Pegler, who was sharply cautioned by Mr. Nicholls.

For a minute or two play ruled in mid-field until Gloucester's front got away on a fast dribble to a dangerous position near the line. Gloucester held, and the backs handled beautifully, but the homesters' tackling was sound, and Harrison could not get through. Gloucester were now having the best of the play, but the defence was good. Then Hudson failed to take when a possible chance came his way, as the result of a pass by Hall. It was now Stroud's turn and Cull, who received from his partner, found touch in mid-field.

The visitors were fined for legs up, and Johnson sent to Romans. The latter's reply was accepted by Wheatley, who also kicked to Romans, the Gloucesterian finding touch in his own half near the centre. Here the referee found it necessary to caution Parham and Smith.

Play continued to be vigorously contested. Cull came away, and passed to Hyam, who knocked on and spoilt a possible chance of getting through to the other end. Gloucester next essayed the passing game, and the ball travelled with admirable precision to Hudson. The wing man was well upset by Smith. The Gloucester halves and three-quarters again passed finely, but the latter failed to get through. The ball was passed back. Pegler picked up and fell over the line in a fairly favourable position amid loud applause. Romans failed at goal.

The game resumed amid great excitement. Stroud, headed by Denley, came down the ground at great speed, Romans fielding cleverly and kicking to touch in his own half. Shortly, with play in the home quarter, C. Smith got hold and made a big dash. Hudson came across him with some force, and Smith appeared to be injured.

There was a slight delay, the game being resumed with Stroud having the advantage, and Romans was again tested. He was collared, and shortly Gent was penalised for picking out of the scrum. Then, with a good kick to touch, and following some grand exchange kicking between Romans and Johnson, Pitt sent to touch in Gloucester's 25, Wheatley repeating the achievement later. Then in some loose play Hyam and Lewis Smith secured and dribbled over, the former scoring in the corner. Johnson failed at the place kick.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Stroud	2 tries
Gloucester	1 try

Stroud supporters were on good terms with themselves at the interval, but they did not fail to recognise that Gloucester now had the advantage of the slope in the ground and the wind, and that everything rested on the stamina of the players. Each side had worked with tremendous energy in the first half.

Stroud re-started, Hudson returning to touch well inside Stroud's half. Gloucester at once opened up the game, but a couple of knocks-on spoiled this. Stroud then got hold from the scrum, but the tackling was keen. Following up with spirit, Stroud bothered Romans, who had to take a flying kick, not a very successful one, to save.

The homesters next handled, but a long throw was badly judged. Lewis Smith and Hudson raced for the ball, the former winning and kicking to touch. From the ensuing scrum the Gloucester backs got possession, but the effort failed by reason of bad play. Hall was luckily able to pick up, and sent to touch at the centre.

Stroud, playing wonderfully well, again caused anxiety, Hudson tackling C. Smith just in time. A poor kick by Johnson let Stroud down, and a Gloucester man picking up put in a big kick down the ground. Hyam ran back and secured near the posts, and made a great effort to clear. He was well collared by Pegler, and the ball becoming loose the same player picked up and dashed over with a try, Romans failing at goal.

Oswell and Gough shone well in subsequent play, but at the centre Gloucester gained the upper hand, and Stephens making a dash down touch kicked hard over the goal-line. Lewis Smith had no difficulty in running down and saving by conceding a minor.

Stroud dropped out, and play advantaged Gloucester, whose backs tried hard. Stroud's tackling, however, was grand. Hall kicked prettily, but Johnson was all there, and returned to touch near the centre mark. George Smith was next conspicuous with an effort, and later Hyam saved splendidly. Hall put in a long kick and Johnson knocked on, a scrum taking place near the posts. Harrison picked up in some loose play and dropped an easy goal. Gloucester now led by four points, and were lasting better than their rivals. The visitors' success was evidently gratifying to their supporters, who made their presence apparent by loud shouts.

Gloucester were fined for off-side at the scrum, but Stroud did not gain much. Gough, Lewis Smith, and Cull were conspicuous for Stroud in some smart centre play. Gent and Stephens shone in some pretty inter-passing at the same place. Lewis Smith was given possession, but he could not clear. Hyam next had a chance, and he was more successful, and he ran finely for about 30 yards and passed to Cull, who knocked-on when a score seemed likely. Stephens got possession from Gent near his 25 mark, and kicked hard beyond Johnson. The latter ran back and sent to touch under difficulties. Hudson was fed, and almost got clear, when Hyam floored him splendidly, but was himself temporarily laid out. Fortunately, the Gothamite was able to resume, and Stroud signalled this by dribbling to half-way, where Gloucester had to exercise all their powers to stop them.

Gent eased the pressure with a good kick, to which Stroud replied with interest, C. Smith running up and securing splendidly, but he was overhauled just in time. Vears secured in his own half, and failing to beat Cull managed to kick across, Johnson having great difficulty in saving near the posts. Cull was injured in tackling Vears, and a stoppage took place. He was able to resume amid general applause.

The game was continued near the posts, and Stroud, thanks to Harrington and Lewis Smith, got out of danger. Gent tried to get through on his own, and was collared, the same thing happening to Vears a minute later.

Hall secured from a long throw-out and cleverly scored, Romans failing to convert. Shortly Vears scored in the corner, Romans failing.

RESULT :

Gloucester	1 goal (d), 4 tries (16 points)
Stroud	2 tries (6 points)

REMARKS.

It was a very fast, keen, and exciting match throughout. In many respects the All Whites played their best game of the season, and they are to be congratulated upon an extremely meritorious performance.

They are a clever side undoubtedly, there being no question that they fully extended Gloucester. The latter were several times lucky to get out of difficulties, and we are bound to say that the score rather flatters the Gloucesterians, who were certainly not more than six points better; it is very doubtful whether they were even that.

There was only one point at which the Citizen could claim to be superior, and that was at three-quarters, whilst we have the undisputed fact that Johnson outshone Romans, and may be ranked as one of the best full backs in the county.

The scoring will bear a few brief comments. In a sense Stroud's first try may possibly be termed lucky, as it originated from a kick by Romans. Yet it was a powerful shot across, and even when Smith secured, he had, it is well to remember, to beat Hudson and Romans, and he did the trick well. The drop-goal which gave Gloucester the lead in the second half was purely a slice of luck. Hall had dropped the ball from a pass, and picking up again sent it over the bar in easy fashion.

Both teams lasted well, and in the last few minutes good work in the loose Stroud was well deserving of reward, Lewis Smith, who headed the movement, being stopped just on the line. Matters were fairly equal forward, Gloucester having a slight advantage so far as heeling went, Stroud showing the better football in the loose. There was quite a battle royal at half, at which point there was not a pin to choose between the sides. At three-quarters, Gloucester's experience told, though there was at times some uncertainty about the players' work.

Individualising, Johnson, as we have said, was better than Romans, his fielding and kicking being a real treat, though Romans was also in form. Hudson did not get much chance, but undoubtedly he is about the best wing in the county at present, and it is a feather in Smith's cap that the Stroud man had his rival well set. Hyam played cleverly, but the best man in the rear division was Hall. Lewis Smith was too well marked by Vears to do a great deal, but he had hard lines. Gent (Gloucester) and Cull (Stroud) were more conspicuous of the half-backs, though Harrington was little inferior, Stephens being the weakest of the four.

Of the forwards, George Smith, King, Denley, and Oswell were always prominent for Stroud, while Johns, Pegler, Parham, and Matthews were shining lights on the Gloucester side.