

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. CHELTENHAM.

CITY TEAM IN THE GARDEN TOWN.

A POOR EXHIBITION.

DAY OF LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

After the excitement of the New Zealand match, football enthusiasm cooled down considerably, and the meeting of Gloucester and Cheltenham on the Town ground to-day had scarcely been referred to during the week.

Owing to injuries to players, the ranks of the City team were sadly depleted, and it was anything but a representative side that turned out against their neighbours. Romans, Wood, "Whacker" Smith, and G. Vears all had to stand down, whilst Hudson, Harrison, and E. Hall were not altogether fit. Smith is suffering from a bruised chest sustained on Thursday, and both Woods and Vears were injured in the match with the New Zealanders. The vacancies were filled by Second teamers, A. Hall (half-back) appearing as wing three-quarter, L. Vears at full-back, and Merchant forward.

To make matters worse the City captain was also prevented from playing owing to the unfortunate fire at his father's premises at Llanthony. G. Gough took Johns' place. Cheltenham, who played seven forwards and three halves, were at full strength.

The match did not arouse the usual excitement, but a goodly contingent of Gloucester's supporters accompanied the team to Cheltenham.

In the absence of both the captain and vice-captain, the Gloucester team appeared under the leadership of Gent, Hawker being deputed to take charge of the forwards. The kick-off was arranged for 3.15, but it was nearly a quarter of an hour later before the teams took the field, the crowd by this time having largely increased.

The teams were as follows : –

Gloucester. – L. Vears, back; A. Hall, E. Hall, J. Harrison, and A. Hudson, three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent and J. Stephens, half-backs; G. Gough, A. Hawker, B. Parham, F. Pegler, G. Matthews, H. Collins, J. Jewell, and J. Merchant, forwards.

Cheltenham. – B. Davey, back; L. Hayward, G. T. Cottrell, F. H. B. Champain, and C. Clifford, three-quarter backs; G. T. Unwin, R. P. Burn, and A. Goddard, half-backs; W. N. Unwin, F. Goulding, F. Jacob, L. Cook, H. Manley, C. Bennett and J. W. Bedell-Sivright, forwards.

Referee : Mr. W. Bowen (Cardiff).

THE GAME.

Cheltenham won the toss, and Hawker started, the return going into touch inside the home half. For an infringement Gloucester were penalised, and an exchange of kicks left play close to the centre line. Heeling from a scrum, the Cheltenham halves got possession, but nothing was done, and the game proceeded very tamely at mid-field.

The Gloucester forwards wheeling, they dribbled down to Davey, who was tackled right on the line by Parham. An exciting scrum followed, and A. Hall, picking up, was nearly over after a strong burst. Cheltenham were very hotly pressed, and Gent getting possession, handed to Stephens, who fed E. Hall. The latter sent on to Harrison, who easily crossed, but the final transfer was ruled forward. Hard lines for Gloucester.

Immediately after Stephens sent out a wide pass to Harrison, but A. Hall failed to take from the centre, and a fine opening was lost. Gloucester still continued to attack, and Stephens forced a minor with a punt over the line. The drop-out was only poorly returned by Vears, and Cheltenham were in the Gloucester end for the first time. Heeling well, the City forwards fed Gent, but Hudson slipped and fell on receiving the pass, and nothing resulted.

A free to Cheltenham gave the Town some dozen yards or so, but Gent marked cleverly and kicked out well. For off-side play by Burn, Gloucester were awarded a penalty, and E. Hall found touch nicely with the kick. Twice the Cheltenham forwards heeled, but Burn and G. T. Unwin made feeble attempts to open out the game, and ground was lost. A good forward rush, in which Unwin, Goulding, and Sivright were prominent, gave Cheltenham a good position, but it was immediately lost by faulty handling. Harrison intercepting, ran down, and the Bros. Hall subsequently handled, the centre eventually being bored to touch.

A penalty against Gloucester enabled Cheltenham to remove the venue, but Gloucester got well down again by the aid of a free against Burn. Gloucester were now well inside the Town 25, and Gent and Stephens opened out the game well. One movement looked likely to bear fruit, but A. Hall was splendidly tackled by Champain. Immediately the Gloucester forwards carried a scrum and went strongly for the line, but the final kick was too hard, and Davey touched down.

Vears replied well to the drop-out, and a home player failing to gather, Gloucester were at once dangerous. A series of exchanges looked promising but the passing was too slow to be effective. Then E. Hall with a well-judged kick found touch some dozen yards from the Town line. Gloucester heeled, but A. Hall miskicked, and Hayward sent down to Vears, and following up effected a grand tackle. The ball getting loose Cheltenham made further headway, and a dangerous rush was only checked a few yards outside. Cheltenham, urged on by the shouts of their supporters, struggled hard to effect a score, and from a pass by Goddard, Burn nearly did the trick.

By desperate work Gloucester removed the pressure, E. Hall assisting greatly by judicious kicking. Play, however, continued in the Gloucester 25 until Harrison changed the scene of operations with a clever kick. Davey responded very poorly, and Stephens securing he ran down the touch-line and passed inside to Hudson, but the transfer was ruled forward.

Gloucester kept the Town on the defence for a few minutes, but Hayward brought relief in fine style. Then a high kick went to Vears, who failed to gather, and Cheltenham had an easy chance of scoring. A Gloucester player took the ball over the line, and a scrum was ordered five yards outside. It was a dangerous time for Gloucester, but Hawker picking up punted out to Clifford. Hudson rushed and robbed Clifford, but he was ruled off-side. A penalty was given Cheltenham, and G. T. Unwin kicked a goal amidst great enthusiasm.

Gloucester re-started, and the City at once attacked strongly. Some clever work by E. Hall gave Hudson a possible chance, but the wing man could not keep clear of the touch-line. A minute later the Gloucester halves worked out a nice opening, and Harrison presented A. Hall with a walk in. The latter, however, failed to accept the pass, and a glorious chance of equalising was lost. The ball coming back to E. Hall, the centre dropped for goal, but failed in his attempt. Gloucester had much the best of the game to the interval, but nothing was scored.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Cheltenham 1 goal (p)
Gloucester Nil

Jacob restarted, Stephens only making a poor return. From the first scrum formed, however, the Gloucester backs came away, Hudson punting high and preventing a return. Hawker picked up and passed to Harrison, who handed to Hudson, but Champain floored the latter from behind. Gloucester, however, immediately got on the attack again with passing, Hudson cleverly finding touch when pressed. Dashing work by the City forwards was well stopped by Goddard, but Gloucester confined play to their opponents' 25.

The visitors, however, failed to gain an opening, and Goddard, robbing Gent, dribbled to the centre. Here Cheltenham tried passing, but Burn passed wildly, and A. Hall coming through kicked down to Davey, who only partially cleared. Harrison picked up and passed inside to E. Hall, who eluded Champain, but unfortunately grounded the ball on the wrong side of the line.

From a scrum five yards outside Gent opened out, but the Gloucester attack was not strong enough. Champain brought a clearance for Cheltenham, but Vears sent play back with a big kick, and the Town were again pressed. Wretched play by the Gloucester backs lost a couple of fine openings, but the City were having all the play. Gent and Stephens were outplaying the opposing halves at all points, and opened up the game splendidly, but the three-quarters were sadly lacking in the necessary finish and nothing but a minor resulted.

Harrison received the drop-out by Champain and dodged more than half the Town team and passed to Matthews, but the latter was well tackled by G. Unwin, though the Cheltenham captain sustained a nasty cut on the forehead in doing so. He had to be carried off the field, and Cheltenham resumed a man short.

Play was continued in the Town 25, and Hudson was almost through in a rush for the line. Cheltenham were simply outclassed at all points now by Gloucester, who made poor use of their opportunities. E. Hall with a fine effort ran right to the line, but Hudson missed, and a minute later another chance was thrown away, the ball being thrown about in a most reckless fashion.

Cheltenham eased the pressure somewhat by taking advantage of Gloucester's mistakes, but play was wholly confined to the Town half. The City, however, showed absolutely no improvement, and their supporters present were simply disgusted at the feeble show. At length, however, following a dodgy run by Harrison, who secured a fine opening, Hudson crossed with a try, but E. Hall failed at goal.

From the drop-out Hudson raced up and started a round of passing, and A. Hall reached the Town 25 before being stopped. Again the Cheltenham lines were hotly assailed, but the home team tackled well and kept their lines intact.

Some lucky kicking by Cheltenham brought the game to the centre, but play was quickly taken back. Then from passing, E. Hall burst through beautifully. A score seemed certain, but Hudson failed to take a high pass from Harrison right on the line. Gloucester pressed right to the end, but failed to add to their score.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 try (3 points)
Cheltenham 1 goal (p) (3 points)

REMARKS.

Our Gloucester representative writes : In all my experience I never remember a game in which a side threw so many chances of scoring away as did Gloucester to-day. Instead of scraping through with a draw the City team ought to have won by 20 points, and this is rather under-estimating the score that should have resulted.

For three-parts of [word/words unreadable] Gloucester confined play to their opponents end, and to all intents and purposes Cheltenham were simply swamped. Forward, Gloucester [word/words unreadable] everything before them, holding an [word unreadable] advantage in the scrums, and at times fairly [word/words unreadable] over their opponents in the loose.

The [word/words unreadable] were also cleverer in heeling, and nine times out of every ten they got the ball back [word/words unreadable]. The latter did his part admirably, and [word/words unreadable] too, was seldom at fault, but the three-quarters failed again and again in combined movement.

Hudson and A. Hall appeared totally unable to take a pass, and the wing men between them must have missed at least half a dozen certain tries.

Harrison, though dodging cleverly on occasion, was also at fault in this respect, and the only man in the line to play up to standard was E. Hall. The latter certainly showed excellent form, and was in a class by himself.

Cheltenham's performance was a huge disappointment, for with their weakened side Gloucester positively overwhelmed them. The seven forwards, though containing some good individual players – Goulding, Bedell-Sivright, and Jacob worked hard – were totally unable to hold the packs, the men appeared out of condition, and at no point of the game did they please their supporters. The half-backs, too, were out of harmony, and of the three-quarters Hayward alone distinguished himself.

L. Vears again played a useful game at full back for Gloucester, but Davey was very uncertain, though he redeemed himself towards the close. Summed up, the game was little short of a fiasco, and I trust it will be many a long day ere I witness its equal.

THROUGH CHELTENHAM GLASSES.

If ever Gloucester have cut a more sorry figure it would be interesting to know date and place. An extraordinary amount of luck enabled Cheltenham to draw a game that under ordinary circumstances would have resulted in a very heavy defeat for them. Their solitary points were the result of a penalty, which Unwin cleverly converted.

Right through the game Gloucester had literally all the play. From the scrums and line-outs the leather always came into the City men's possession, but time after time, in sickening succession, capital openings failed miserably and unaccountably. The visitors were in every department the better team and had only themselves to thank for not winning with plenty of points in hand.

Cheltenham were unfortunate in losing their skipper, but it made no real difference, as their opponents could do nothing right. Hayward was the pick of the homesters, doing yeoman service, and he was frequently prominent in splendid individual efforts. Davey was not as good as usual.

With regard to the visitors, Lindsay Vears had not much to do at back, but did that little well. Gent fed his three-quarters in his usual inimitable style. The brothers Hall also showed up. Hudson was, however, the best of the three-quarters, judged on a very bad afternoon's performance. The home forwards found their opponents too powerful, and the New Zealand imitation did not bring any remarkable result.

A little pugilistic encounter after the match between two of the spectators furnished far more interest and amusement than did the whole of the game.

GLOUCESTER A v. GORDON LEAGUE.

SECOND STRING SUCCESSFUL.

For this match at Kingsholm the A team suffered severely from the calls of the premier XV. and other causes, and could only put fourteen men into the field. The backs were considerably chopped and changed about from their usual positions. The League had a good side out. The teams were :

Gloucester.— F. Welshman, back; H. Hughes, H. Cook, and R. Craddock, three-quarter backs; J. Goddard and H. Smith, half-backs; F. Pyart (capt.), H. Taylor, F. Clutterbuck, T. Meadows, W. Holder, T. Guy, and H. Watts, forwards.

Gordon League. — G. Holford, back; W. Hollands, T. Humphreys, E. Langford, and J. Oswell, three-quarter backs; S. Edwards and A. Goddard, half-backs; T. Spires, R. Norman, S. Alder, D. Holland, F. Welshman, C. Voyce, J. Welshman, and T. Bannister, forwards.

Referee : Mr. T. Phelps.

The opening stages were very even, neither side getting far beyond the centre. The home men tried the New Zealand formation in the scrum, but of course it was a first attempt and did not perhaps work wonders instantaneously. Nevertheless it was a step in the right direction, and shows that the locals have profited by the visit of the Colonials this week and the great exposition of the game they gave.

The Gloucester men worked hard, and eventually obtained a footing in the League 25. Here the forwards heeled prettily, and J. Goddard worked out a lovely opening for Hughes, who beat Holford and ran round behind the posts. It was a very pretty bit of play. Welshman goaled.

After a spell of even play, the League, grasping the opportunities afforded them by the A team's mistakes took up a dangerous attacking position, but the defence prevailed. Gloucester paid a visit to the other end, but when they looked like scoring off-side tactics lost them the opportunity. Cook dribbled over smartly a moment later, but a League man robbed him of the ball and touched down – a near thing.

Even play followed for some time, but Gloucester threw away many chances by their poor passing. The League eventually attacked, and by a strong forward burst succeeded in crossing the line, Spires being credited with a try, which was not improved upon.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester A 1 goal
Gordon League 1 try

On resuming, the League quickly took up the offensive, and a fine dribble by the forwards en masse looked certain to end in a try, but Hughes got across and kicked dead just in time. The League put on the pressure again, but Smith relieved, and a spell of centre play followed. The ball was hereabouts given plenty of air, but mistakes in handling were too numerous on both sides.

Gloucester forced a minor and were again quickly worrying the League defence, but their work lacked finish, and the League beat them off and pressed in turn, setting up a hot attack. Only a touchdown resulted, however.

After some give and take play in which neither side could claim much, the Gloucester boys rallied strongly, and from a scrum about 15 yards out the ball came out to Cook, who cleverly tricked Holland by feinting to pass, and scored a smart try. Welshman failed at the goal kick. Just before the call of time a nice passing movement let Hughes in in the corner.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 1 goal 2 tries (11 points)
Gordon League 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

It was not a great game to watch, but nevertheless the Gloucester Seconds deserved their win, although had they taken advantage of all the opportunities which came their way the score sheet should have shown a considerably augmented total of points.

The Gloucester forwards were slightly superior in the scrums, and certainly got the ball better, thanks to the efforts of the hookers. The new formation was a success, and should be persevered with. Undoubtedly it's the game.

Meadows, Holder, and Pyart played a good game, and at half Smith and Goddard were too good for the other Goddard and Edwards. At three-quarter Craddock was not a success, but the others did exceedingly well, Cook and Hughes working capitally together, although several passes went a-begging all along the line. Spiers, Holland, and Holford shone in their respective positions for the League.