

THE CITIZEN

FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 1905.

FOOTBALL.

TOMORROW'S MATCHES.

COUNTY CUP FINAL.

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL.

For this important contest at Kingsholm to-morrow (kick-off at 3.30), the Gloucester team will be as follows : —

G. Romans, back; C. Smith, E. Hall, J. Harrison, and A. Hudson, three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent and J. Stephens, half-backs; W. Johns (captain), A. Hawker, B. Parham, G. Matthews, F. Pegler, J. Jewell, H. Quixley, and G. Vears, forwards.

Our Bristol correspondent writes : The Bristol team has yet to be chosen, the final selection being made to-night. The latest information, however, shows that at least one prominent three-quarter will be an absentee. Shewring, the International, injured himself in the Cinderford match, straining the muscles of the thigh so badly that he is a cripple, and will not be able to play. This is particularly unfortunate for Bristol and it is rather bad luck that the injury should have happened at such a time.

Then Lamond has injured his foot, and he is among the doubtful ones.

Forward Bristol should be at full strength, and it is in this department that they should hold their own with the 'Cestrians. They were distinctly off colour on Monday, but it was only a weakened side that was put in the field, and against London Welsh and Cardiff the front rank men did especially well.

The selection of Mr. Nicholls as referee has given great satisfaction, as his impartiality is well known, and he is just the man needed to control an exciting cup match.

Bristol have only won one out fixture this season, viz., with Clifton, and their record is none too promising.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

COUNTY CUP FINAL.

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL.

KEEN RIVALS AT KINGSHOLM.

GLOUCESTER LAND THE CUP AND MEDALS.

A BILLIANT VICTORY.

Gloucester and Bristol, the successful teams to emerge from the preliminary rounds of the county cup competition, met at Kingsholm to-day for possession of the handsome challenge trophy presented by the Cinderford Club, and the gold medals given by the County Union.

With such keen rivals in opposition, the fixture aroused great interest, and an exciting struggle was confidently looked forward to. In the preliminary rounds Gloucester had disposed of Cheltenham and Stroud, whilst Bristol were successful against Lydney and Cinderford, though in the latter case a re-play was necessary.

The particulars of the results are as follows : –

FIRST ROUND.

(* Denotes Home Team).

	G.	T.	Pts.		G.	T.	Pts.
* Gloucester	2 (1p)	2	14	Cheltenham	1	0	5
* Stroud	1 (m)	2	10	Clifton	0	0	0
* Bristol	2	1	13	Lydney	0	1	3
* Cinderford ...	3 (1p)	1	16	Bream	0	0	0

SECOND ROUND.

	G.	T.	Pts.		G.	T.	Pts.
* Gloucester	2	1	13	Stroud	0	0	0
* Cinderford	1 (p)	0	3	Bristol	0	1	3

In the re-play at the County Ground, Bristol beat Cinderford by one try (3 points) to nil, after extra time.

From the above figures it will be seen that in two matches Gloucester scored 27 points to 5, whilst Bristol obtained 19 points to 6 in three games. Gloucester's luck in getting choice of ground did not desert them in the final, and the fact of playing at home was regarded as a big advantage to the City. Only twice this season had Gloucester been beaten at Kingsholm (by Swansea and Lydney), and in both instances the margin was a narrow one – a try and two points respectively.

For to-day's game Gloucester, with one exception, relied on the same fifteen that gained such a brilliant victory over Northampton the previous week, the change being Gordon Vears for Taylor at forward.

Bristol, unfortunately, were badly handicapped in being deprived of the services of their two International three-quarters (Lamond and Shewring), both of whom are on the injured list. Still, the visitors were powerfully represented forward, and it was in this department Bristol were expected to concentrate their energies.

After a fine morning the weather took an unpleasant change towards 2 o'clock, and rain fell heavily during the next hour, making the ground very sloppy in places. A special excursion brought a goodly contingent of Bristolians, and the gate was further increased by visitors from the surrounding districts.

The Gloucester team took the field punctually on time, but the visitors had not arrived on the ground at 3.30. They were, however, in attendance a few minutes later.

The Gloucester players returned to the pavilion, but the rival teams were out again at 3.37, lining up as follows : –

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	BRISTOL.
G. Romans	Backs.	J. Oates
C. Smith	Three-quarter	F. S. Scott
E. Hall	backs.	G. Chick
J. Harrison	"	A. E. Wood
A. Hudson	"	D. W. Smith
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	A. Straker
J. Stephens	"	R. Spoors
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	T. Webb (capt.)
B. Parham	"	J. L. Mathias
A. Hawker	"	N. Moore
F. Pegler	"	W. H. Neads
J. Jewell	"	H. Thomas
G. Matthews	"	E. Meyer
G. Vears	"	L. Meyer
H. Quixley	"	J. Vinnicombe

Referee : Mr. F. W. NICHOLLS (Leicester).

THE GAME.

Bristol won the toss, and Webb deputed the home side to start from the Worcester-street goal against the wind. Hawker set the ball rolling, and Straker failing to gather he was forced to punt straight to touch well inside his half. A couple of lines-out resulted in Bristol making headway, and operations settled at the centre.

From the first scrum Gent passed out to Stephens, and the ball came out to Harrison, who was soon pulled down by Wood. Gent did a smart bit of work, and Parham securing the leather passed out wide to Hudson, who punted down. Oates was at fault, but he managed to turn the ball luckily to touch. Gloucester were placed in a good position now, and from a smart movement initiated from the scrum the ball came across to Smith very neatly. The latter was collared but passed back to E. Hall, and the centre slipped over the line with an exceedingly clever try, amidst great enthusiasm. Romans failed with the kick.

Bristol dropped out, and a return being prevented play opened at mid-field. Here the Gloucester half-backs fed the third line, and Hall cutting up the field passed nicely to Hudson, who failed to handle cleanly. The Bristol forwards gained ground with a rush, but Gent kicked down to Oates, who was well floored by Smith. The Bristol custodian passed back to Scott, who slipped and fell, and Gloucester were again dangerous. The situation, however, was saved, and Wood punted out to Gent, who marked. With his kick he found touch near the visitors' 25. Here Gloucester shone with some clever combination, but the ball was knocked on.

Wheeling a couple of scrums the Bristol forwards rushed past the centre, but Mathias got off-side and stopped a promising movement. The visitors, however, by further good footwork got well down, only to see Hudson effect a clever save and kick to touch under difficulties.

A penalty against Bristol for off-side enabled Gloucester to reach mid-field, where Hudson further improved matters with a fine kick to Oates, who only partially replied. Gent cleverly beat the Bristol halves with a neat dribble, and later picked up and punted to touch near the Bristol 25. Here play was fought out desperately, the visiting forwards putting in splendid work. A dash through by Harrison, who intercepted, gave Gloucester a distinct advantage, but Matthews was floored in front of goal.

Immediately after the Gloucester backs took part in a series of exchanges, and Smith dashed for the line in great style. He, however,

was cut off. He attempted a pass inside, but the ball went astray, and a try was lost. Gloucester kept up a hot attack, and for off-side by Bristol halves the visitors were penalised. Romans took a shot and covered the cross-bar with a lovely kick, giving Gloucester a 6-points' lead.

Bristol resumed, and play was fast and exciting on the heavy ground. The Gloucester forwards, with Parham leading, shone in the line-outs, but Oates returned well to touch. The Bristol forwards wheeling got off with a dangerous rush, but Hall brought off a superb save.

The same player a moment later was prominent with a splendid bit of play, which was well backed up by the forwards. Near the centre Gent secured and passed to Stephens, who fed his third line smartly. The ball was handled beautifully, and Harrison breaking away passed to Hudson, who sailed away to Oates. The latter collared his man, but Hudson managed to pass to Hall, who completed a magnificent movement by scoring in a good position. The charge was disallowed, but Romans failed to convert. The game had been in progress about 25 minutes, and Gloucester led by 9 points.

Resuming, there was some hot forward work at mid-field, but Gent at last opened out. Stephens, varying his tactics, punted, but Wood secured, though he was at once upset. Chiefly through Wood and Scott Bristol changed the venue to the home 25, but the Gloucester backs brought off a brilliant combined movement, which ended in Hudson racing down to Oates. He punted over the latter's head and raced for possession, but was fouled by the Bristol custodian, who was promptly penalised. Romans had a shot for goal, but the kick was charged down, and the ball got in the open. Bristol tried hard to get clear, but they were checked, and Gloucester rushed to the other end. The game came back to mid-field, where Gent was conspicuous with a clever bit of play.

For palpable off-side by E. Meyer Bristol were penalised, and Romans found touch in the visitors' half with a good kick. Straker made headway with a nice punt, and for "legs up" Gloucester came under the ban of the referee. Wood sent to touch nicely. Later the same player had

a shot for goal from another penalty, but the kick fell short, and Harrison easily sent out.

Wood now changed places with Spoors, and mainly by his efforts Bristol attacked for the first time. Straker, in a loose scramble in the Gloucester 25, made a mark, but from the easy place Wood missed the goal. The ball went to Hudson, who sent to touch outside the 25. Bristol, however, returned to the attack, and play to the interval was contested in the home end.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 1 goal (p), 2 tries.

Bristol Nil

Webb started the second half, Stephens receiving and punting to touch near the centre. From a throw-out Hawker secured and handed to Gent, who kicked down the field, Scott returning. The Gloucester forwards were early prominent with a couple of strong bursts, Spoors and Wood being laid out in checking the movements. Both had to receive the attention of the ambulance men, and the game was temporarily delayed.

Continuing, the Bristol forwards carried a couple of scrums, and made some 20 yards before being stopped by Harrison. The visitors next tried passing, but Vears intercepted, only, however, to pass forward to Johns. Play was desperately keen, Bristol showing improved form.

A dangerous dribble took the ball well down, but Hudson picked up and passed back to Romans, who found touch cleverly. From the home 25 the Gloucester halves initiated a bout of brilliant passing, Hudson being the last to receive. The wing man raced along in grand style, but could not clear Oates, and no one being up a fine opening was lost.

The Bristol forwards were putting in some grand wheeling, but Gloucester returned with clever back play, and E. Hall was nearly clear once. Harrison was prominent with a good effort to break through,

but he was checked, and then the Bristol front rank rushed right down to Romans. The City custodian, however, was safe.

Bristol continued loose footwork, but Harrison robbed them cleverly and punted to Oates. Following up he again nearly got possession, just failing to gather for a straight run home. The effort led to Gloucester gaining a footing in the Bristol half, and play was keenly fought out in this quarter. From a throw-out Bristol gained an advantage, and Pegler was injured in stopping the rush. The Gloucesterian had to be carried off the field, but returned in less than a minute.

A tricky punt by Stephens sent the ball to Oates, who was pounced upon by the City forwards directly he got possession. With a desperate effort Bristol worked out of danger, only to see them sent back by E. Hall. In straight pushing the Bristol forwards frequently gained ground, but Gent was wonderfully smart at the scrum, and got the ball away even when his forwards were beaten in the scrums. From one movement initiated by the Welshman it looked certain for a score, but Smith's pass was knocked on by Harrison when there was a gift try for Hudson.

Bristol worked out slightly, but the Gloucester backs were on the move again. Smith was given possession, and the right winger ran down with only Oates to beat. He essayed a pass inside, but Hall was in front of the ball and knocked on. After this Bristol had a turn, and from a smart dribble by Wood Gloucester were forced to concede a minor. The drop-out was well returned, and Bristol held their own for a few minutes.

Attempting passing, Hall intercepted and had practically a clear field with the exception of Oates. On reaching the latter he yielded to Harrison, but the latter was overhauled, and Bristol again luckily saved. The visitors removed the situation with loose footwork, and from a penalty Wood cross-kicked to Mathias, who passed to Smith. The latter punted to the centre of the field, where Hall made a mark under great pressure. The kick brought relief, but Bristol were going very strong, and the home defence was seriously tested.

Douglas Smith, from a pass by Wood, had a good chance of going through, but he threw the ball away, and Gloucester easily saved. Bristol, however, kept up the pressure until Gent relieved with a lovely kick to touch. In the next minute Hudson, receiving from Gent, brought off a strong dash down the touch-line. He had several players waiting on his right, and there was a beautiful chance of scoring. Hudson, however, attempted to punt over Oates' head and failed, sending the ball clean into the latter's hands.

Gloucester, not to be denied, put in some brilliant work after this, and a score ought to have resulted on the right wing, Smith's re-pass going astray. Gloucester made strenuous efforts to score, but Wood getting off-side robbed Gent. He was, however, penalised, but Romans' kick for goal went wide.

The drop-out was well followed up, and the Bristol forwards securing, they were not stopped until in the home 25. Here Bristol tried handling, but a transfer went right into the hands of Harrison, who ran down to Oates, and passed to Gent. The half-back being pressed from behind, handed to Hall, who was within an ace of the line, when he was overhauled and tackled by Douglas Smith. The ball got loose, and "Whacker" Smith scrambled over, but the referee ordered a scrum five yards out.

Gloucester redoubled their efforts in the last few minutes to increase their lead, and close on time Jewell was credited with a try as the result of a forward burst. Romans again failed at goal. Immediately after no-side was called.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal (p), 3 tries (12 points)
Bristol Nil

REMARKS.

It was a strenuous struggle, but there could be no two opinions as to the better team. Gloucester gained their victory by superior back play,

and the first two tries were the result of brilliant combination and headwork.

The heavy state of the ground favoured the Bristol team, who were stronger forward and kept the ball as close as possible. The City pack, however, held the scrums sufficiently well to get the ball back occasionally, and the backs did their work handsomely. The first half was wholly in favour of the home team, who gave a particularly bright display, and at times fairly ran away with their opponents.

Bristol played up desperately in the front, but behind the scrum the visitors were not in it. At half especially, Bristol cut a sorry figure until Wood changed places with Spoor. Then there was a decided improvement, the Devon player being easily the smartest man on the side.

Gent's display for Gloucester was real class, and the little Welshman was altogether too smart for anything on the opposing side. In opening up the game he proved ubiquitous, and time after time he stopped the rushes of the Bristol forwards in daring fashion. In Gent Gloucester have a treasure, and he bore no little part in the City's handsome win this afternoon. At outside half Stephens proved a capable and efficient colleague, and once more gave a finished and sound display. Gloucester's advantage at three-quarter was no less prominent than at half. In no respect could the Bristol third line be compared with the home quartette, who were at the top of their game, and played exceedingly pretty football. The conditions prevailing rather handicapped the players in running and passing, and the few mistakes made in handling were excusable.

At times the City players rose superior to all difficulties, and some of the passing bouts were beautifully carried out. Harrison and Hall, in the centre, both exhibited trickiness, resource, and judgment, and their displays gave unbounded satisfaction. Hudson was as noticeable as ever with his brilliant dashes, the way he got over the ground greatly surprising the visitors. The Gloucester right winger was a big handful for Douglas Smith, who curled up badly at times, and altogether gave a feeble display. "Whacker" Smith was nicely nursed by E. Hall, and the

pair worked together with effect, the re-pass again completely deceiving the opposition. Scott was the most useful of the Bristol three-quarters, who, however, did not get a fair chance in attack.

The Bristol forwards bore the brunt of the work for the visitors, and they gave a very fine show. Led my Mathias and Webb, they wheeled with great effect, and against a less sound defence Bristol would not have been defeated pointless. The whole eight worked energetically throughout, but the two players named, with Neads and Moore, caught the eye most.

Gloucester, though over-weighted, put up a grand contest, and in the loose they were every bit as good as their opponents. Johns, Vears, Matthews, and Hawker, were conspicuous for individual efforts, but there was not a weak spot in the pack, and each player can take credit for doing his fair share of the hard work. The rival full-backs were in good form, but Oates was called on more often than Romans. The Bristolian averted danger for his side on several occasions, but hardly kicked so good a length as usual. Romans was particularly safe in fielding, and found touch well with his returns.

PRESENTATION OF THE CUP AND MEDALS.

ENTHUSIASTIC DEMONSTRATION.

A tremendous reception awaited the victorious team as they emerged from the changing room in the grand stand to receive the cup and gold medals. The huge crowd cheered again and again, and Johns was carried shoulder-high, right across the front of the stand.

A fresh burst of cheering greeting Mr. E. W. Ball, President of the Gloucester County Union, when he rose to present the Cup and medals. He said he considered it a great privilege, as President of the County Union, to have to present that Cup, which had that day been won by Gloucester. (Cheers.)

There was a small history attaching to the Cup. It was first presented by Mr. Bathurst for competition among Forest of Dean clubs, and was

then won by Cinderford; it passed on to a League competition won by Bristol; and then Cinderford handed it to the County Union for a competition on the knock-out principle, and as they had seen that afternoon Gloucester had won it. (Cheers, and a voice, "We shall keep it.")

As an old Gloucester county footballer himself – he played for the county 25 or 30 years ago – he was very proud to have been nominated for the Presidency of the Union by the members of the Gloucester Club.

He noted with pride that in the recent England and Scotland match there were more Gloucestershire men in the England team than from any other county. (Cheers.) It was said that day that Gloucester had their best team out, and that Bristol were without their two International centre three-quarters. He was not mentioning this in any way as an excuse, because he was impartial enough to think that it was not Bristol but Cinderford who ought to have been there that day. (Loud cheers.)

He congratulated the City of Gloucester on its very fine football club, and he complimented Johns and the team on the very fine game they had played that day (cheers), a feature of which, in his opinion, was the great exposition of half-back play given by the little man Gent. (Loud cheering.)

He then handed the Cup to the Gloucester captain amidst another big outburst of popular enthusiasm, and each member of the team as he came to receive his medal was greeted with deafening cheers. It was a great demonstration.

PLAYERS' OPINIONS OF THE GAME.

THE GLOUCESTER CAPTAIN.

Our representative had a chat with Johns, the popular Gloucester captain, who was in the middle of enjoying a steaming hot bath. He expressed admiration for the gold medals, and said the men were very pleased indeed with them.

He said they were glad they had won the game, and he thought they fully deserved to win by the points they had in their favour, especially considering the greasy state of the ground and the lightness of their forwards.

"If the ground had been dry," Johns continued, "our backs would have had a far better chance of showing their undoubted superiority over the Bristol outsiders. We were not so heavy in the front, but, all things considered, we held them very well – and we won, that's the great thing!"

THE BRISTOL CAPTAIN.

The Bristol skipper (T. Webb) was also in the midst of his toilet when our representative caught him. He said it was a very determined game. "The play of the Gloucester backs won the game for you. Forward, Bristol had the best of the tussle, and they ought to have scored in the latter part of the second half, and I believe they would have done but for the very fine intercepting of your men."

GEORGE ROMANS.

George Romans thought the Gloucester backs gave a fine exhibition under the circumstances of wet ball and greasy ground. The Bristol forwards were fine in wheeling and loose footwork, but the visitors were clearly beaten behind, and if it had been a dry day he thought Gloucester would have won by over 20 points.

The first two tries were real beauties, and Gent was in great form. The game was played in the best of spirit and good feeling, and was a good sporting contest throughout. He was sorry Shewring and Lamond were absentees, but he had no doubt that if they had been playing Gloucester would have won just the same.

J. L. MATHIAS.

Mathias, the Bristol International forward, who was drying himself in front of the fire when our representative got to him, had very little to

say, but it was very much to the point. "I can't say much. Your backs were good; ours were rotten. Good night."

JC