

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

RUGBY.

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL.

SUBSTANTIAL WIN FOR GLOUCESTER.

INJURY TO OATES.

Bristol furnished the opposition at Kingsholm to-day, and the first meeting of the season between last year's cup finalists aroused great interest.

Bristol brought a powerful forward team, but Lamond was missing from the back division, whilst Flemmer, the South African who was invited to play, could not turn out.

T. Leonard, the old St. Paul's College three-quarter, and who played for Gloucester in some of the early matches last season, found a place in the visiting ranks.

Gloucester were unfortunate enough to get two players – E. Hall and Parham –injured in the opening match with Clifton, and neither was fit to-day.

J. Stephens came in at centre three-quarter vice Hall, and J. Merchant (who occasionally appeared for the City some three seasons ago) filled the vacancy forward.

The teams were : –

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	BRISTOL.
G. Romans	Backs.	J. Oates
C. Smith	Three-quarter	F. S. Scott
J. Stephens	backs.	H. Shewring
J. Harrison	"	J. Phillips
A. Hudson	"	T. Leonard
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	J. Spoons
A. Wood	"	J. Larcombe
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	J. L. Mathias
A. Hawker	"	A. Manning
G. Vears	"	T. Webb
F. Pegler	"	W. H. Thomas
G. Matthews	"	W. Cooper
H. Collins	"	H. Hosken
J. Jewell	"	N. Moore
J. Merchant	"	W. H. Neads

Referee : Mr. W. W. JAMES.

THE GAME.

The teams were 15 minutes late in taking the field, and it was 3.45 before Bristol, having lost the toss, kicked off in the presence of a large attendance. Mathias' kick went to touch, and another start was necessary. This time the ball went to Stephens, who punted back to Phillips at midfield. The Bristolian attempted a return, but the ball was charged down, and Stephens dribbled to Oates, who was floored in his 25.

Bristol gained a few yards from a scrum, but Gent, taking a kick, put in a good punt, and the ball going over the line, Oates conceded a minor. Romans replied to the drop-out with a clever touch-finder, and later Stephens securing punted well down. Oates, however, got across and sent to touch nicely. Play hovered on the Bristol 25, where several scrums were fought out. Larcombe eventually gained a few yards, but Gloucester immediately rushed back, Collins aiding the movement with a neat bit of work in a line-out.

The ball was again taken over the line, and another minor resulted. Following the drop-out Wood missed a pass from Gent, which enabled Bristol to reach the centre. Here Larcombe received from a scrum, and sent to Romans. The latter replied with a fine kick and followed up, but some Gloucester forwards got off-side.

Bristol were next penalised, but Gloucester did not profit much by the resultant kick. Stephens at length made headway with a useful punt, and Oates being floored Gloucester found a footing in their opponents' half. Here the Gloucester pack heeled, and Gent, Wood, and Harrison handled nicely. The centre, finding Hudson marked, put in a kick which Oates received, the Bristol captain sending to touch.

Gloucester next attempted passing, but Hudson failed to take from Wood, and the movement was soon checked. The Bristol forwards, with some clever wheeling, removed operations to more favourable quarters, and Shewring further improved their position with a nice kick to touch. Then the Gloucester backs got moving, and after some sharp handling Stephens found touch close to the Bristol line. Spoons relieved the pressure, but Gloucester returned with a fine forward burst, and Matthews was only stopped in the nick of time.

A desperate rush followed, in which Oates was knocked out, and there was a brief delay. The visiting captain, however, was able to resume, and a scrum ensued five yards from the Bristol line. The visitors wheeled, but without the ball, and Gloucester were nearly over. Bristol gradually worked out, and then from a throw-out the ball went straight to Shewring, who, unmarked, was able to get clean away and put in a big kick, which completely changed the venue. Bristol made further head-way, and from a neat opening by Manning, Hosken scored a try. Oates failed at goal.

Gloucester dropped out, and the home team at once rushed to the Bristol half. The City forwards heeling, the Gloucester backs put in a bout of passing, but Smith failed to take Stephens' transfer.

Hawker was next prominent with a good effort, and later Hudson had a fine opening, but he made a sorry mess of his pass. Gloucester, with another passing bout, looked likely to pierce the defence, but Stephens' pass was unaccepted by Smith. Gloucester still kept up the attack, but the visitors eventually relieved, and in some open play Shewring came through and dribbled past Romans. It looked certain for a try, but Smith got back and handed to Romans, who kicked out of danger.

Bristol, however, returned to the attack, and Spoors made a fine run, being only brought down a yard or two outside the line by Romans. Gloucester cleared slightly, but Shewring, taking advantage of an opening, ran strongly for the line, but was pushed to touch-in-goal.

Gloucester dropped out, and centre play followed. The Bristol forwards were doing splendidly in the scrums, and it was rarely the Gloucester men heeled. For off-side play Bristol were penalised, and Romans dropped for goal, but the ball went wide of the posts. Following the re-start, play was fast and vigorous, but there was little in the way of brilliant incident. The Gloucester backs were once set going, but Stephens' kick went to Oates, who easily sent to touch.

Ensuing play was contested in the Bristol half, where Romans tried a long shot at goal from a penalty kick, but the ball was charged down, and nothing resulted. Gloucester, however, were not to be denied, and Hudson made a big attempt to beat the opposition, but he was hauled down, an opponent being hurt in making the tackle.

The game was soon continued, and Hudson was only held outside in another desperate dash for the line. Oates, this time, was hurt in stopping the Gloucesterian, but soon resumed. Immediately Gent initiated a bout of passing, and Wood feeding Hudson, the wing man dashed through and over the line amidst great cheering, Romans failed at goal, and the sides were level at the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 1 try
Bristol 1 try

When the game was resumed Oates was an absentee, and Neads went full-back. Shewring received Hawker's kick off and found touch just inside his own side of the centre mark. Gloucester early looked dangerous, but Neads sent them back. The home team, however, got going again, and Smith sending out a wide pass to Harrison the latter immediately handed on to Hudson. Going strongly for the line, the Gloucester right-winger made a big effort to cross, but Scott, coming from the other side, stopped him well. From the subsequent scrum Gent secured and passed to Wood, who beat the opposition in fine style and scored a good try. The same player converted amidst enthusiasm.

Bristol resumed, and Shewring put his side in a good position with a well-judged kick to touch. The Gloucester backs, however, worked down with a series of exchanges, and the game was quickly transferred to the opposite end. Bristol defended well, Scott especially doing capital work.

Gloucester, however, were going well now, and were soon on the attack again. A good forward movement promised well, but in the open the ball was knocked on. Then, from some kicking, Hudson had a chance, but was knocked over and lost the ball near the line. Some wild kicking by Gloucester lost them considerable ground, and then there was a spell of scrambling play at mid-field, flying kicks being very numerous.

Despite a man short in the scrum, the Bristol pack held their own, and got possession quite as often as the home forwards. Gent and Wood at length combined in some good work, which gave Gloucester an advantage. Scott fumbling, the City forwards had a chance, and Jewell picking up, handed to Merchant, who scored in the corner. Wood's shot at goal failed.

Bristol re-started, and the pace continued very warm. Even play ensued for a time, but Gloucester, with some passing exchanges, again got dangerous. Bristol, however, kept their lines intact, and Manning, with a lucky kick, centred play.

From this point Gloucester brought off a pretty combined movement, but Smith could not effect a re-pass. Gloucester gradually worked down to their opponents' quarters, where several marks followed in quick succession. Little advantage accrued to either side, and play hovered in the Bristol half.

Stephens was cheered for some tricky work, and his effort led to Gloucester pressing again. There was an absence of finish in the attacking movements, however, and Bristol at length cleared. Soon the game went back, and Scott and Neads being at fault the City forwards dribbled over the line, and Johns was credited with a try. Wood, however, again missed the goal.

Resuming, Gloucester put in some useful work, and the Bristol defence was sorely tried. From a scrum on the 25 line, Gent picked up, and whipping out a sharp pass to Wood, the latter darted down touch, and diving for the corner beat Neads and scored a capital try. The place-kick by Romans was unsuccessful.

Bristol resumed, and following up the drop-out Moore secured, but he was soon upset, and losing the ball Hawker picked up. A series of exchanges followed, but they profited little. In a scramble, however, Wood sustained an injury to his shoulder, and had to leave the field. Stephens went up half, and Hawker came out at wing three-quarter. It was only for two or three minutes, as Wood returned, and taking the full-back position Romans went to three-quarter, and Hawker returned to the scrum.

Gloucester continued to have the better of the exchanges, but Phillips changed the venue with a strong run, being finally upset by Wood. The home team eased up after this, and Bristol taking advantage of this slackness worked hard to increase their score. It came very quickly, too, for following some scrambling loose play the ball was kicked over the home line. Romans, evidently under the impression that something was wrong, stood still, and Moore ran up and scored. No goal resulted. Play to the end was fairly even.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal, 4 tries (17 points)

Bristol 2 tries (6 points)

REMARKS.

It was by no means an attractive game to watch, and even Gloucester's substantial win failed to make up for the very moderate display afforded. Occasionally there was a bright incident to relieve the monotony of unscientific methods adopted by both sides, but these came at rare intervals. Bristol, knowing where their strength lay, made every effort to keep the ball close, and these tactics accounted in a large measure for the scrambling play continually in evidence.

Dealing with the Gloucester team, the City cannot be said to have given satisfaction. Granted the forwards were overweighted, they might have done better in the scrums had the men packed properly. The heeling again left a good deal to be desired, and there was a lot of wild play in the loose which will have to be eradicated ere the team can hope to secure that measure of success which their supporters look forward to.

The work in the lines-out was good, and Matthews, Collins, Jewell, and Vears put in some capital footwork. Hawker, acting no doubt under instructions, was often outside the scrum, and in the capacity of wing forward he rendered useful service, tackling well and initiating one or two bouts of passing. Still it hardly seems a wise policy to withdraw the heaviest man from the scrum for this work, especially seeing the extreme lightness of the Gloucester pack.

At half-back, Gent and Wood got through a lot of good work, and there is little doubt the couple will develop into a very warm combination. Some of Gent's sharp passes out went astray to-day, but for the most part Wood did not give much away. His two tries were real startlers, and stamped him as a player of strength and resource. The Gloucester three-quarters have not yet got into their stride, and the combination broke down badly at times.

In the first half passes were missed when there was every possibility of a score, both wing men being at fault in this respect. There was a distinct improvement later in the game. Hudson made several fine dashes for the line, having hard lines in losing at least a couple of tries. Stephens, who deputised for Hall, showed no falling off in form. He was particularly prominent all through, and was more than once mainly responsible for putting Gloucester in a good attacking position.

Harrison did not get many opportunities, but he kicked cleverly and fed Hudson with judgment. Romans did sound and useful work at full-back, and though he did not always find touch his kicking generally was of good length.

Bristol, on the day's play, did not deserve to lose by such a margin, but until they can improve their back division they can hardly hope to win matches against teams in the top class.

The injury to Oates, which kept the Bristol captain off the field in the second half, was a source of considerable weakness. Oates did a lot of fine saving, and, before his final retirement, he received some hard knocks.

Bristol possess a splendid pack of forwards, with weight, speed, and cleverness. Mathias, Moore, Manning, and Hosken were a quartette always noticeable, and Neads, prior to going full-back – where, by the bye, he gave a creditable show – gave a good account of himself. Larcombe, the ex-Taunton half-back, was more than useful at the scrum, and Spoors showed pace and dodging powers on two occasions.

The Bristol third line was the weak spot. Shewring did one or two good things, and Scott tackled well, but as a combination they were below Bristol's standard.

Gloucester receive Swansea next week, and the City will have to do much better if the Welsh Champions are to be beaten.

GLOUCESTER A v. MONMOUTH.

RESULT :

Monmouth 1 try (3 points)
Gloucester A Nil

JC