

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1906.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. NEWPORT.

A DESPERATE GAME.

WEAK CITY TEAM SUCCESSFUL.

FIRST VICTORY OVER NEWPORT FOR SEVEN YEARS.

Though there was an absence of the usual excitement associated with the visit of Newport, there was a fairly large crowd at Kingsholm to witness the return game with the City club. The weather was summer-like, and the ground necessitated a bountiful treatment of artificial watering. Unfortunately Gloucester were sadly handicapped owing to defections, the absentees including C. Smith, D. R. Gent, J. Stephens, and A. Hawker, whilst Wood's services were also dispensed with. Newport were short of Vile, but otherwise were at full strength. The teams lined out as follows : —

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	NEWPORT.
G. Romans	Backs.	D. J. Boots
A. Hudson	Three-Quarter	E. Plummer
J. Harrison	Backs.	S. Adams
E. Hall	"	D. Prothero
L. Vears	"	W. Thomas
A. Hall	Half-Backs.	W. Harvey
J. Goddard	"	W. Priest
W. Johns (capt.)	"	C. M. Pritchard (capt.)
B. Parham	Forwards.	J. J. Hodges
G. Matthews	"	G. Boots
G. Vears	"	E. Thomas
F. Pegler	"	W. Dowell
H. Collins	"	E. Jenkins
J. Merchant	"	W. H. Williams
W. Holder	"	G. Jones

Referee : Mr. J. Milburn (Bristol).

THE GAME.

Gloucester won the toss, and Pritchard kicked off against the sun. The ball went to touch, and there was another start, Romans replying to Prothero, whose return was knocked on near the centre. Gloucester gained a few yards from the opening scrum, and then A. Hall started his third line in motion. E. Hall eventually kicked down to D. Boots, who got in a good reply to touch.

The Newport forwards burst away from a line-out in trying to check which Merchant was temporarily laid out. The ball was still in play, and a visitor picking up, punted to Romans, who retrieved a fumble and found touch at the 25 flag. Attention was now given to Merchant, and after a couple of minutes he was able to resume.

Gloucester got the ball out nicely, and E. Hall kicked well to Plummer, who was floored, but a colleague relieved cleverly. Carrying a scrum, the City forwards rushed away in fine style, reaching the Newport half before being stopped. Here A. Hall passed out beautifully to Hudson, who attempted to break through, but he was collared. The International, however, transferred to E. Hall, who raced down and handed to Vears, but Thomas effected a good tackle. For an infringement Newport were penalised, and from a difficult position Romans only just missed landing a goal.

Newport dropped out, and Harrison missing, the visiting forwards kicked to Romans, who marked. The kick availed little, however. Scrambling play followed slightly in favour of Gloucester, who confined operations to their opponents' end.

At length Harvey opened out, and Adams made headway with a strong run. Prothero continued the movement, but his pass to Plummer was not accepted. Immediately after Newport forced a minor with a kick over the line.

On the resumption play centred at midfield, until A. Hall beat Harvey and dribbled cleverly, but Plummer saved by kicking to touch. Gloucester with good footwork went closer to the line, but the visitors came away with a passing bout. Plummer ran down and punted, but Romans fielded and got in a good return. Newport were penalised for not putting the ball in straight, and Gloucester benefitted by the kick, L. Vears, gaining further ground with a capital touch-finder.

The visitors heeled smartly from subsequent scrums, but there was no finish to the attacking movements. Eventually Hodges, fielding in some loose play, started a bout of passing. Thomas, who received from Adams, went strongly for the line, but Romans pulled him to touch. A big effort by Holder gained relief for Gloucester, and later Hudson, snapping a pass, tried to clear the opposition. He, however, was hemmed in, and he was forced to pass to Harrison, who got in a very clever kick under difficulties.

Newport worked out with a passing run, but Harrison intercepted, and with another pretty effort found touch close to the Newport line. A scrum was formed five yards outside but A. Hall was penalised for knocking the ball back in, and Newport cleared to beyond the 25. Here Harvey got the ball away to Adams, but the latter knocked on, and thus lost a good opening.

Goddard was at fault in gathering the ball from his forwards, and the Newport men rushed away, but faulty handling spoiled a promising movement. The game so far had been very scrappy, and mistakes were frequent. Gloucester gradually worked down to the visitors' 25, where G. Vears and an opponent had a bit of roughing.

Newport by strong forward play removed the venue to midfield, where Goddard was sadly at fault in taking a pass. Harvey dribbled to Romans, who later was forced over his line, but he managed to get a kick to touch. Gloucester, chiefly through L. Vears and A. Hall, relieved, and the latter made one fine opening, but Hudson could not take the pass. Soon afterwards the interval was called, play being in the Newport 25.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester Nil

Newport Nil

Johns re-started, and the City forwards following up gained possession and kicked to Harvey, who fumbled, but a colleague was handy and saved. An exchange of kicks followed between Romans and an opponent, ending favourably to the home custodian, but the Newport forwards regained the ground with a grand burst. G. Vears got back and dropped on the ball in daring fashion, and Romans getting a pass back punted down in good style. The return was charged down, and Parham and D. Boots went for the ball, the latter getting there first and effecting a nice save.

Clever play by Goddard and A. Hall down the blind side of the scrum saw the latter make a possible opening, but the subsequent passing went astray. In the next minute A. Hall was away again, but his transfer was intercepted, and Newport reached the centre. The visitors now made tracks for the home line, but Hudson got across and effected a grand tackle of Plummer.

Some strenuous forward play followed in the Gloucester half, and a misunderstanding between the home backs nearly proved fatal. A flying kick by Johns proved useful to Gloucester, but Newport got back again, thanks to a fine touch kick by Pritchard. The visitors made a big effort to cross, but Romans got in a splendid relief kick, and following up kicked past Boots beyond the centre.

Exciting play followed, but there was nothing brilliant displayed. Gloucester appeared to have a good opening just now, but they lost the ball, and Prothero ran back and nearly put Newport in. Priest made a feeble drop at goal, but though the ball went over the line Hudson did not touch down. He passed to Romans, who returned, but the latter's transfer was forward, and a scrum ensued close to the Gloucester line. The City got out of this difficulty thanks to Hudson, but Newport confined play to the home end.

E. Hall made a clever run, which gave Gloucester an advantage, but they were soon forced back. Near the 25 line Johns broke away with the ball at his feet, and cleverly taking it past the third line, centred nicely. Boots failed to gather, and Matthews kicking on, Hudson, who came along at a rare pace, picked up on the run and raced over behind the posts amidst great enthusiasm. Romans goaled, at which success there was a further demonstration.

Following the drop-out E. Hall was prominent with a neat bit of play, and Hudson was set going again, but in trying to beat Boots he lost the ball – hard lines.

Intercepting a pass Newport got off with a dangerous movement, but it was successfully checked. A cross-kick, however, gave Pritchard a good chance, but the Newport skipper missed the ball altogether. Play was desperately contested just inside the home half, but A. Hall at length broke away in smart style and passed to his brother. Feinting to transfer Ernest cleverly tricked Thomas and went clean through to Boots, when he re-passed to his brother, but the latter was tackled.

Newport worked out of danger, but Romans found touch well with his kicks, and kept the game in safe territory. On the half-way line Parham secured and put in a splendid run, but a fine effort did not materialise owing to a knock-on. In the concluding stages Newport struggled hard to save the game, but the defence was equal to all emergencies, and the end came with Gloucester winners by five points.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal (5 points)
Newport Nil

REMARKS.

Gloucester's victory came in the light of a welcome surprise, for with the disorganised fifteen [doing] duty the most enthusiastic supporter hardly hoped for success over the famous Uskside combination.

The triumph was well deserved, for though Newport had the better of the first half, the City took a strong lead on the change of ends, and ill-luck alone lost a couple more scores at least.

The game was one of the most desperately fought out seen at Kingsholm this season, and this fact accounted in a measure for the lack of brilliant incidents. Forward, the rival pack [put] up a very keen fight, and all praise is due to the City eight for their fine show. Granted, the form at the start was not promising – the men tackled too high, and were erratic in the open – but subsequently the Gloucester men settled down to sterling football, and in all departments they were quite the equal of their opponents.

Once they found their feet, so to speak, Gloucester did not look back, and in all phases of play they gave nothing away. The tackling on both sides was of the keenest – there was no mistake in putting the men down – but occasionally there was an inclination to overstep the mark. One or two players lost their tempers – in such a desperate contest perhaps there was some excuse – but the referee kept the men fairly well in hand.

Gloucester's best work forward to-day was perhaps the footwork, the men keeping the ball under control and hanging well together. One of the finest bits of individual play was that displayed by Johns, which led up to Hudson scoring the only try of the match. The City captain beat his man cleverly by screwing the ball into the centre of the field, and this movement enabled Hudson to get up.

Johns did a lot of good work in other directions, and his most prominent supporters were Holder, Parham, and G. Vears. The first-named had to take a lot of roughing in the lines out, but he never resented the attentions of his opponents, and took it all in the game. Vears was most consistent in following up, and was conspicuous for some good stopping. At half-back Goddard performed fairly well for a first appearance, and apart from a dropped pass or two made no serious error.

A. Hall was in capital form, and held his own with either of the opposing halves. Harvey, of whom much was expected, did not shine to any extent, and Priest possessed no special ability.

The Gloucester three-quarters did not see much of the ball in the first half, but later on they were kept fairly occupied. E. Hall played a very clever game in the centre, and Harrison showed distinct improvement on his Bristol form. Hudson did good, all-round work, and was ever on the look out for an opening. L. Vears fulfilled his duties satisfactorily.

Newport ought certainly to have done better with the chances they had, but the attacks broke down badly at the critical moment. Adams ran strongly once or twice, and Prothero was useful, but the wings were not fed as they should have been.

At full back, Romans and Boots were well matched. They were both severely tested, but their experience and judgment served them in good stead.

Gloucester's last victory over Newport was at Kingsholm in 1898-9, when the City won by 11 points to nil. Previous to that Gloucester had not defeated the Usksiders for 11 years.

GLOUCESTER A v. NEWPORT A.

CITY SECONDS BEATEN BY A GOAL-KICK.

At Newport in fine weather, before a small crowd. The opening stages were of a ding-dong and scrappy order, the game being chiefly confined to the forwards.

From a throw-out Hollands scored for Gloucester, but no goal resulted. After this Edwards scored for Gloucester, a goal following. Evatt and Davies scored for Newport, both tries being improved upon.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Newport A 2 goals
Gloucester A 1 goal, 1 try

Both packs kept up a hot pace in the second half, but there was not much science in the play. From a cross punt Williams raced over for Newport in the corner. Rowlands converted from the touch-line.

After scrambling play Bloxham, a Gloucester forward, scored a try, which was majorised. Attacking was carried out by both sides in succession, but the defence was equal to all demands.

RESULT :

Newport A 3 goals (15 points)
Gloucester A 2 goals, 1 try (13 points)