

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 1906.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. NEWPORT.

DEFEAT OF THE CITIZENS.

GAME WON IN THE FIRST TEN MINUTES.

After allowing fixtures to lapse for a season – due to a misunderstanding as regards dates, and not to any friction as stated in a London contemporary – these old rivals renewed acquaintance to-day at Newport.

This was Gloucester's first visit to Wales this season, and the City were anxious to make a good impression. Newport have fallen somewhat from their high standard, but at home the famous Uskside combination are still a powerful side to tackle, as witness the close fight they made with the New Zealanders in December.

Gloucester have been going very strong of late, and on form the City representatives had a good chance of breaking the long list of defeats sustained on the Newport enclosure.

Following Newport's example of playing the new formation, Gloucester introduced A. Wood as extra half, the old Bristol player reporting himself fit again.

Both teams were at full strength, and there was every prospect of a close and interesting game.

The teams were : -

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	NEWPORT.
G. Romans	Backs.	R. B. Griffiths
C. Smith	Three-quarter backs.	W. Thomas
E. Hall	"	S. Adams
J. Harrison	"	H. Uzzell
A. Hudson	"	A. Davies
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	W. J. Martin
J. Stephens	"	T. Vile
A. Wood	"	G. Jones
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	J. Hodges
A. Hawker	"	G. Boots
B. Parham	"	C. M. Pritchard
G. Vears	"	W. H. Williams
G. Matthews	"	W. Dowell
F. Pegler	"	E. Thomas
H. Collins	"	E. Jenkins

Referee : Mr. A. J. Davies (Welsh Union).

THE GAME.

There was a severe frost in Newport during the early part of the morning, but a thaw set in and made the ground slippery on the surface. Pritchard started the game for Newport in the presence of about 4,000 spectators. After an exchange of kicks Smith made his mark, but Gloucester got off-side, and a scrum followed in the visitors' half. Newport heeled smartly, but Wood tackled well, and nothing resulted.

Even play ensued, and then Gent went out nicely to Stephens, who fed Wood, but the latter gained no ground. A good kick by Harrison was mulled by Davies, and went to touch in the Newport end. Passing by the home three-quarters looked promising until Adams dropped on the ball. Romans gathered, but was forced to run back over his line, where he touched down. A scrum followed near the Gloucester line, and from a sharp pass on the blind side Thomas scored in the corner. Griffiths failed at goal.

Resuming, Romans was prominent with some good touch kicking, which kept the game at centre. Newport broke away with a forward rush, but Smith robbed them of the ball and dribbled back to Davies, who was at once pulled down.

Gent got the ball out well to Stephens, but the latter's pass was intercepted, and Jones was nearly through. Gloucester worked out to the quarter line, but Newport at once attacked, and Jones, receiving from Vile, scored in a good position. The place kick again failed.

Gloucester dropped out, and by good forward work kept play in their opponents' quarter. A splendid follow-up and tackle by Smith was applauded, and the same player a little later made a good effort to break through the defence, but succumbed to numbers.

Gloucester attacked with vigour in the next minute, and some sharp exchanges gave Hudson a chance. Unfortunately, the wing man slipped when only a yard outside. From the subsequent scramble Wood crossed, but the point was not allowed. By a big effort Newport relieved the pressure, but Gloucester stuck to their opponents finely, the forwards doing extremely well.

Ensuing play was wholly confined to the Newport 25, and some very hot work was witnessed. Gloucester struggled hard to effect a score, but two possible openings were spoiled by forward transfers. Newport changed the venue with big kicks, but the City came back with a brilliant rush, which was only stopped in the nick of time.

Remarkable play followed, players on both sides making mistakes on the greasy ground. Gloucester eventually got set going, and Hall, with a fine run, scored a try, Romans converting. Soon afterwards half-time was called.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Newport 2 tries (6 points)
Gloucester 1 goal (5 points)

Hawker resumed for Gloucester, and opening play was fought out in the home half. Newport gained ground with loose footwork, and then Boots, securing in a line-out, punted high. Hodges dashed down and robbed Romans, but with a clear run in he lost the ball.

The ground was now in a fearful state, and the players retained foothold with difficulty. A clever kick by Harrison was followed up by Smith, who dribbled some yards, but a home player got back and saved. Give and take play ensued, ending in Newport rushing right to the Gloucester line. From a scrum close in, Jones was given possession, and punted right across the ground, which enabled Thomas to score wide out. Boots failed to improve.

On the re-start Newport tried passing, but Hudson intercepted, and the Newport half was visited. Here Gent started the City backs, and the ball went right across to Smith, but he failed to beat Thomas. Gloucester went close up after this, but the defence prevailed. Good kicking brought Newport relief, and later the home forwards, headed by Hodges, reached the Gloucester 25. For an infringement the visitors were penalised, but Davies' attempt to drop a goal was a feeble one.

Gloucester played up strongly on the drop-out, but they were forced back to their line, where Newport set up a hot attack. The City defence, however, was admirable. A useful punt by Gloucester brought much-needed relief, and then followed a spell of even play at mid-field.

Johns was off for a few minutes, and during this period Davies put in a strong run. He looked all over a scorer, but cutting inside he was surrounded and collared. A minute later Davies was again off with a smart effort, but Pegler just touched his toe and brought him down.

Newport continued to attack, but a splendid effort by Hudson gained some thirty yards for his side. From this point Gloucester took up the running, and Hall dribbling finely Newport were placed on the defensive.

Gloucester still had a chance of pulling off the game, and Gent getting the ball out there was a nice opening. The opportunity, however, was not accepted, and Newport taking the ball rushed to the Gloucester quarter. The last few minutes were hotly contested near the City line.

Newport played up desperately to add to their lead, but they were beaten back, and a clever kick by Stephens from a pass by Gent took the game to near mid-field.

RESULT :

Newport	3 tries (9 points)
Gloucester	1 goal (5 points)

REMARKS.

Newport won the game in the first ten minutes, during which brief period they twice crossed the Gloucester line. From this point to the interval the City had more of the play, and experienced hard lines on several occasions. Hall's try was a beauty, and certainly stood out as the best effort of the afternoon. The game was spoiled in great measure by the treacherous nature of the ground, which frequently upset the players.

Newport, taking the game throughout, had the best of the scrums. They got the ball oftener, and were stronger in the loose. Still, the Gloucester pack put in a lot of sterling work, Matthews, Vears, Pegler, and Parham being seen to advantage.

The Gloucester halves did good work, Gent being exceptionally smart at the base of the scrum. At three-quarter, Hall was in capital form, and Smith put in a tremendous amount of work.

Hudson played with his accustomed dash, but he only had one real chance of doing anything, and then he had the misfortune to slip near the line.

Jones, Vile, Thomas, and Uzzell were conspicuous for Newport behind. At full back Romans did well, and was superior to Griffiths.

GLOUCESTER A v. NEWPORT A.

EVEN DRAW AT KINGSHOLM.

These old opponents met at Kingsholm before a small attendance. The ground was very slippery in places.

The teams were : —

Gloucester : G. Griffiths, back; H. Hughes, H. Cook, H. Smith, and L. Vears, three-quarter backs; A. Hall and J. Goddard, half-backs; F. Pyart (captain), W. Holder, G. Gough, J. Merchant, F. Welshman, R. Craddock, A. Purton, and H. Taylor, forwards.

Newport : H. J. Rowlands, back; S. H. Williams, W. H. Gunstone, W. J. Winfield, and R. Plummer, three-quarter backs; D. Protherough and M. Buckley, half-backs; C. A. Evett, W. Johnson, W. Webb, C. Jenkins, G. Hulm, A. Palmer, H. Thomas, and R. G. C. Bryant, forwards.

Pyart kicked off, and although Newport were penalised in the first moment, the centre was the scene of operations for some time. Newport got well beyond the neutral zone by good footwork, but the home backs opened out the game and gained ground.

The Gloucester forwards broke away, but Winfield saved and found touch nicely. Then the forwards heeled nicely, and Hall passed out to Smith. The latter drew the opposition out to the wing and then passed trickily back inside to Hall, who dived over. Vears failed with the kick.

The home forwards, playing up strongly, confined operations to the Newport 25, where the visitors lost a forward through injuries.

Gloucester opened out the game again, but the last pass was intercepted. More passing saw Gloucester maintaining the pressure, and Hughes narrowly missed a score after a fine bout of passing. The Newport man returned to the field amidst applause.

For off-side Gloucester lost a big slice of ground, and Newport reached the centre, but Hall, with a dodgy run and pass to Cook, who found touch, sent them back again. Cook punted up well, and a race for possession ended in the ball going into touch in goal, Smith and Hughes being close on to it. From the drop-out Gloucester returned to the attack, but Newport broke away and gained the home quarter, chiefly to faulty handling and fielding by the home backs.

Gunstone, Winfield, Protherough, and Plummer indulged in some nice handling, and Gloucester were called upon to defend for the first time. Several marks accrued to either side, and Williams narrowly missed a dropped goal.

Rowlands replied to Hall's kick-out, and the game once again fluctuated in the Gloucester 25. Newport were now playing better football, and their backs had repeated chances, but the defence was keen. Still in Gloucester territory, the Newport forwards kept getting the ball, and the homesters were kept pretty busy, Gunstone and Williams particularly being troublesome.

Griffiths, misjudging the flight of the ball, was collared in possession, and Gloucester were in a tight corner, but Cook relieved with a good touch-finder.

For some time play ruled even, and then Goddard broke away with a pretty dribble, but Newport, with good outside work, carried the game into the home 25, where Gloucester were awarded a free, and Newport were given one a moment later, a minor being conceded.

Hughes intercepted a pass well and punted out, but Rowlands put in a splendid return, and at half-time the game was within two or three yards of the home line.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester A	1 try
Newport A	Nil

On resuming Newport immediately made an incursion to the Gloucester 25. Hughes kicked out, but Rowlands marked and with a well-judged kick re-imposed the pressure. Then the Gloucester forwards broke away nicely and centred play. The Newport backs got going, but the passing was slow, and the ground gained was quickly won back by a dashing movement by the home front rank.

At the centre Gloucester were penalised for "not in straight," and Buckley gained a nice bit of ground. Newport were in turn penalised, and more centre play followed. Another penalty was given against Gloucester for the same infringement, but little ground was gained this time.

Rowlands was responsible for a fine touch kick, and Newport went away from the line-out with a fine dribble. The visitors were again penalised, however, and Gloucester obtained relief. Buckley slipped away beautifully from the scrum, but Griffiths brought him down.

Gloucester were now hard put to it to keep their lines intact. Time after time the visitors got the ball out, and although they were close in they could not score. Eventually Gloucester worked out, but Newport were quickly back at work again, and attacked strongly. Eventually, however, Cook got away on his own, and with a capital dribble changed the venue to the Newport quarter. An exchange of kicks left the game at the Gloucester 25.

By hard forward work Gloucester gained neutral territory, and Vears put in a good touch-finder. Gloucester tried passing, but the effort lacked finish. Newport, however, with telling rushes from the lines-out, kept pegging away. Hughes and Smith dribbled away beautifully, and although deliberately fouled by a Newport man the referee did not notice it, and gave a kick the other way – clearly a mistake.

Gloucester attacked for a brief spell, but a fine rush by Newport transferred the game again to the home 25, where Gunstone narrowly missed a score in the corner, the last pass being ruled forward.

Newport held their footing in the Gloucester 25 until Vears relieved with a touch-finder from a free kick. Newport threw a fine chance away a moment later, the passing breaking down when Gunstone and his wing man had a clear field. The next moment Newport carried a scrum and a forward was credited with a try wide out. Rowlands failed with the kick.

Even play followed to the end.

RESULT :

Newport A 1 try (3 points)
Gloucester A 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

After pretty play in the first five minutes the game deteriorated into a very mediocre display, neither side showing to much advantage. The visitors were a bit the bigger in the front rank, but there was not much between the rival eights on the day's play.

At half, Newport were splendidly served by Buckley, who worked the scrum, and had the three-quarters accepted their opportunities they might have much more seriously troubled the home defence.

However, the City quartet were not blameless in this department, and the game may well be described as one of lost opportunities, although it appeared to be any odds on Smith or Hughes scoring once in the second half when out by themselves, had they not been so badly fouled. Why a try or a penalty kick was not awarded them was a mystery to the spectators.

The visiting three-quarters were quicker off the mark than the home four, but their passing was very poor, and the movements were quickly broken up. Holder, Craddock, Pyart, and Merchant were prominent in front, and though Buckley often beat Goddard there was not much between the rival halves.

Between the home three-quarters there was very little to choose, but Griffiths at back was rather slow and did not compare favourably with Rowlands, who played a splendid game throughout for Newport. Gunstone was the pick of the visiting centres, the other three being about on a par.

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