

The View from the Dressing Rooms – and the Referee

THE CITIZEN, MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 1900

ENGLAND v. WALES

WHAT CAPTAIN BANCROFT THINKS ABOUT IT

Proceeding immediately after the match to the headquarters of the victorious team – the Ram Hotel – a “Citizen” representative found his way to the dressing-room, where the players were tubbing and fighting the battle o’er again. Through a mist of steam, Skipper Bancroft was dimly struggling with a tight jersey, and before he could extricate himself he was “hailed up” by our man, who, after tendering hearty congratulations, asked for a few impressions of the game.

“Here’s one,” said the captain, holding up his left wrist to view. It was as big as a potato. “But about the play: where we had the advantage was in our combination; and the passing was smart at times. Our halves showed up better than I expected, and I was well satisfied with their work. Considering that Hellings was off the field for twenty minutes and Davies for fifteen, we have no reason to growl at the result. It was a good sporting game and the Roses fought hard and pluckily. The score sounds big, but after all we only crossed the line twice to their one. But where the points came in was in the converting. The Englishmen seemed weakest in their combination – but what can you expect when men have to play who don’t know each other’s game?”

“We didn’t win by weight, as you can see – (and stripped for the tub the Welshmen certainly didn’t look a lumpy lot) – but the forwards were smart in getting away. The three boys were nervous at first, as might have been expected, and disappointed me for the first quarter of an hour, but after they had warmed to the game they were all right. Davies got badly mauled, and for the last part of the game didn’t know one end from the other. He isn’t right yet.”

Here the captain took a cup of tea to the man in question, and with paternal care poured it down his throat, and told him to “buck up.” But he still looked very sick.

Resuming, Skipper Bancroft jerked his thumb towards Trew, and remarked the “young ‘un” was as smart and promising a three-quarter as he wished to see. “And I don’t care who the next man is,” he added.

By this time our man had taken mercy on the weary captain, and helped him to shed his sticky jersey; and he quickly disappeared in the steam of the hot tub. The attitude of the Welshmen was one of quiet satisfaction; there was no crowing, for they realised that it had been a tough fight.

THE ENGLISH CAPTAIN'S OPINION

The Rev. R. H. Cattell, the captain of the English team, was run to earth in his room at the bell Hotel by a "Citizen" representative, and in the course of a very brief conversation he expressed the opinion that it was in combination that the Englishmen were beaten.

"It was a very fast game," continued the Blackheathen, "and changed about most extraordinarily; in fact, I thought after our first try in the first ten minutes of the second half that we were going to win. They were a better forward team than we were."

In answer to a question the captain said, "There were rather many stoppages from injuries to players, but they were due entirely to accident, and though the play was at all times vigorous there was nothing rough."

About the result, Mr Cattell said: "I don't think there was 15 points between the two teams; in fact it was, in my opinion, a pretty even game, only the Welshmen made the most of their opportunities and we didn't."

"Gamlin, I thought, played a very fine game, and smothered his man well. R. W. Bell and C.T. Scott, of the forwards, played grandly. I don't, personally, care to individualise further."

THE REFEREE'S VIEW

Mr. Adam Turnbull, the referee, on being questioned by a "Citizen" representative, said: "It was a very fast game; in fact one of the fastest I have ever refereed in. The pace slackened off a bit once or twice, but it came up again at the finish with a vengeance. I must say that Wales were not worth quite such a big victory on the day's play. The first five minutes were the high for the Englishmen, but they did not take their opportunities."

Mr Turnbull refused to be drawn into [commenting on] individual players.