

# GLOUCESTER JOURNAL

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## *The Week's Sport.*

The state of the weather on Saturday last was little or no more favourable for football than that of the previous week, and those who visited the Spa – and they were very numerous – could hardly have secured their money's worth, for it was only occasionally that the players could be seen at all. In the early part of the morning a thick fog hung over the city, but towards mid-day it lifted considerably and partially disappeared, only to return, however, with greater density than ever during the afternoon.

The visitors – Cardiff – were late in arriving, and this was to be regretted, as the fog was growing visibly thicker during the threequarters of an hour that the home team were kept waiting, and had the game been commenced at the advertised time a much better view of the play would have been obtained. As it was, often the only indication as to where the play was being carried on was the sound of the referee's whistle.

It is therefore quite impossible to write anything respecting the details of the game, and the play of the individual members of the teams, but a sufficiently good idea of the game could be gathered to enable us to state without the slightest hesitation, that Gloucester had the best of the play.

During the first half it was very even, each team in turn laying siege to their opponents' goal, but after the interval the home men made matters uncomfortably warm for the Welshmen, who hardly succeeded in getting the leather past the centre line at all, and certainly not past the Gloucester 25 line, after the unfortunate circumstance which cost Gloucester the only point scored during the match – a minor.

Hughes, in returning the kick-off after half time delayed his kick too late, and a visiting forward charged the ball, a race ensuing to touch down which resulted in favour of C. E. Brown. After this the game was carried into the Cardiff 25, where it was kept for the greater part of the remaining half hour.

The match was a most disastrous one for the Gloucester club, for it was the means of depriving them of the invaluable services of one of the best players in the team, and certainly the most brilliant scoring three-quarter. The game was not many minutes old, when Grist, (whose weak shoulder was protected by a leather case) being collared by two Cardiffians, fell upon his arms with such violence, that his shoulder was again wrenched out of place, and, in all probability, with this misfortune, his football days are ended.

Hence-forward Gloucester had to play one man short, and the manner in which they played up against such a severe handicap was worthy of the highest commendation; and what the result would have been had the teams been equal in numbers, considering that with fourteen to fifteen Gloucester had the best of the argument, can only be surmised.

Time after time the Gloucester forwards got to the Cardiff line, but failed to cross it, and once, when Walter George picked up at the 25, and avoided his opponents until over the goal-line, where he touched the ball down, a try certainly appeared to have been scored. However, the whistle blew, amidst cries of "Well played Newport" – Mr. Young, of Newport, was referee – and George had to go back.

We understood the objection to the try was that the ball was taken from the scrum, but, though after picking up the leather, George was soon lost to view in the fog, he was near enough to the pavilion for us to see that the ball was several yards from the "scrum" when he became possessed of it. Whether any infringement took place afterwards we cannot say, but it is quite clear that the ball was not taken out of the scrum.

The crowd appeared very dissatisfied with Mr. Young's refereeing, and did not scruple to show their disapproval, when, having awarded Cardiff penalty kicks for "hand-ball" etc., by the home men, he refused the same privilege to Gloucester for what appeared to be equally glaring breaches of the law by the visitors. These and other indications of partiality earned for him a somewhat unenviable "ovation" on the part of the crowd, for as he walked off the field he was lustily hooted, and had to be escorted to the Ram Hotel by two or three policemen.

Commenting on the match, the *South Wales Daily News* says :

'Every now and then, and oftener than not, one could hear my old friend Jack Young, of the Tredegar – and you all know where that famous hostelry is located – tooting away on the whistle, his performances invariably being greeted by the crowd with cries of "Well played, Newport."

Mr. Young's refereeing may have been as unfair as the cries of the mob would seem to indicate. One thing I am certain of, however, and that is that if he favoured Cardiff, or acted contrarywise, not one of the five or six thousand people who stood outside the ropes and did not, by reason of the fog, witness the match they had parted with their sixpences and shillings to see could make affidavit and fairly and squarely take exception to any of his decisions.

In fact, if one thing was made more clear than the other it was this. When the crowd howl down a referee, depend upon it nine out of ten of them only shout because they are primed up to the neck with a spirit of partisanship. The Gloucester crowd on Saturday howled because their champions did not win, and since, of course, Gloucester must be streets ahead of Cardiff so far as play is concerned, someone had to be slated.

It is tolerably safe to slang a referee, who, having no interest in either side, has no friends on the ground. Hence the abuse freely levelled at Mr. Young by people who, in this instance, not only could not possibly have seen the match in its entirety, but were only made aware of the presence of the referee by the frequent tootle-tootle of his whistle.'

The *Western Mail* writer says :

'Gloucester were very unfortunate in losing Grist, one of their best three-quarters, before half time. He was collared by two of the opposing team, and falling awkwardly, he had his shoulder dislocated. But, notwithstanding this bit of bad luck, the home team struggled manfully to score. They, indeed, did better with three three-quarters than they had done with four, and for the first time in the game threatened the Cardiff line.

Bagwell and Ward played a splendid game throughout, running, passing, and kicking with admirable judgment and celerity. The Gloucester skipper did not get so many opportunities, but now and again he brought off some pretty bits of play.

I should like to say a word or two in regard to the referee (Mr. Young, of Newport), whose decisions were not acceptable to the crowd who assembled at the Spa. I am not going to say whether those decisions were just or not, because it was impossible at times to see what took place. Mr. Young was, however, hooted over and over again by people who could not possibly see the game, and when he left the ground a large crowd had assembled at the gate to express their disapproval in groans and other unmusical noises.

As I have said, I am not going to express an opinion on Mr. Young's decisions, but I think it only fair to that gentleman that it should be explained that he was selected by Gloucester, not by Cardiff. It was said on the ground that Mr. Young was a late member of the Cardiff team, but it was not explained that that was ten years ago, neither was it made known that the Cardiff men knew they had no favour to expect from him. It was said that Cardiff had brought their own referee up with them. Now, I happen to have seen a telegram from Mr. Smith, the Gloucester umpire, to Mr. Young, stating that he relied upon him to come up and act as referee. In addition to this, I believe, the Gloucester team were satisfied with the decisions; at any rate, they did not express themselves to the contrary.'

The following were the teams :

Gloucester : A. F. Hughes, back; T. Bagwell, C. E. Brown (captain), R. Grist, and E. J. Ward, three-quarter backs; S. A. Ball and W. George, half-backs; G. J. Witcomb, A. E. Healing, A. Cromwell, T. Collins, A. Collins, R. Jenkins, J. Williams, and H. V. Page, forwards.

Cardiff : H. Hughes, back; C. S. Arthur, F. N. Jones, T. W. Pearson, and W. Cosslett, three-quarter backs; Merritt and H. M. Ingledew, half-backs; D. W. Evans, W. E. O. Williams, J. Mahoney, W. T. Morgan, A. F. Bland, E. P. Biggs, C. Allen, and A. F. Hill, forwards.

- The Gloucester 2nd XV. went to Cheltenham, and played a sensational game with Cheltenham Town. Nearly the whole time was occupied by the visitors piling on the score, and when no-side arrived they had registered no less than six goals and six tries to nil.

The tries were scored by Jackson four, George two, Williams two, Powell, Hopewell and Gorin one each, whilst Powell kicked a goal from a penalty kick, and placed the other five goals from tries.

It is needless to say the home team was outplayed at all points, and the II. acquitted themselves brilliantly.