

# GLOUCESTER JOURNAL

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## *The Week's Sport.*

The meetings of Gloucester and Moseley on the football field invariably create a deal of interest and attract a bumping gate, and Saturday was no exception to the rule. This was the first time the teams, who have been sturdy rivals for a number of years, had faced each other this season, and the result of the meeting was a fine and enjoyable game.

Looking at the performances of the Midlanders in their last few matches, which have not been of the most brilliant character, the odds were generally thought to be on the home team, and this forecast proved correct, as the visitors were decidedly outplayed, and only their splendid defensive tactics saved them from a very much heavier reverse than that which was meted out to them by the city lads.

One try and three minor points is not a very formidable score, but there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who helped to swell the big crowd at the Spa as to which was the better team. In the forwards Gloucester were heavier than their opponents, and though there was no great disparity in the tight squashes, yet they had the pull very decidedly in the loose, some of the eight using their feet excellently, and the whole pack combining in dribbling rushes which were very effective.

Behind the scrum, too, Gloucester were appreciably superior to their opponents in the attacking line; their passing was very smart on the whole, and sometimes brilliant, their running was also quite up to the average, and their kicking well timed. At half there was not much to choose between the respective pairs, but the heeling out policy of the home scrummagers gave Ball and George an advantage which they were not slow to make the most of, and this accounted for the fact that all the passing that took place was amongst the home backs.

Thus the home team were seen to much greater advantage both in the back and front division than the visitors, the consequence of which was that the play was mostly in the Moseley half, and the backs of the latter team were almost solely occupied in defending their line against determined rushes, well-executed dribbles, and the oft-repeated attempts of the home backs to cross it. And it was in this respect that Moseley backs distinguished themselves, for they tackled finely, and checked the advances of the home forwards time after time just at the right moment; in fact, their defensive play all round was irreproachable. The one man who, perhaps, did more towards averting a crushing defeat for his side than any other was Oswell, who never failed to bring down his man when he had half a chance, and often relieved the pressure by his kicking.

The first quarter of hour of the match was occupied by play of a very give-and-take character. Gloucester, either by means of a bout of passing or a clever dribble, repeatedly reached the Moseley 25, and the latter as often raised the siege with a burst by the forwards, always headed by the Cantab., Mayne.

At length, however, the home team followed up one of their incursions into the visitors' 25, by a determined attack on the goal, and refused to be driven from their assumed position until something tangible had been scored; and notwithstanding that the Midlanders conceded a minor point in the hope of getting a little relief, the kick out was well returned, and quickly followed by a try by George, who made the most of an opening by taking a wide pass high up and slipping past a would-be obstructionist. The place was an easy one, but Hughes just missed the mark.

This disaster appeared to rouse the visitors to a big effort, as, following the drop-out they went away with a rush to the home end, which held the contestants for some five or seven minutes, at the expiration of which time Gloucester again assumed the upper hand and maintained an aggressive attitude almost uninterruptedly until the finish.

Considering that they were better all round than their opponents and that they passed more accurately and smartly than they have done in any previous match this season, it seems remarkable that they added nothing to the score after the interval, and points to the conclusion that they experienced considerable ill-luck.

On as many as half a dozen occasions members of the home team crossed the Moseley line, only to experience the mortification of being recalled, whilst it would be idle to endeavour to calculate the number of times that one and another got close up to the line before being stopped.

At least once or twice excellent opportunities were thrown away by some small mistake, but though the score was not so large as it might have been had fortune favoured Gloucester, yet the supporters of the latter have reason to be satisfied with a victory, whether it be small or large.

It was somewhat interesting to the supporters of the home club to notice the form shown by the two full backs, that of Moseley being the late back of the city XV. Oswell had much more to do on Saturday than Hughes, and as we have already said, he acquitted himself admirably. Hughes had no collaring to do of account, and in the kicking department, though he showed vast improvement on his form of the preceding Thursday, yet he was by no means so brilliant as we have seen him. He has acquired a tendency to run too near to his opponents before kicking, and thus stands a great risk of having the kick charged, to say nothing of the danger of being collared with the ball.

However, we shall look for a return to his old form to-day, when a London team of considerable prowess, in the person of the Old Merchant Taylors, visit the Spa for the first time. At three-quarter Ward, who we learn with regret played for the last time this season, was again in evidence, and played well from start to finish. His kicking, tackling, and running were of a high order, and his departure will be another heavy blow for the club.

Bagwell and Brown, though the former once lost a try by an indifferent pass, played a sound game, Bagwell running particularly well, whilst Brown showed that he is better fitted for his present position on the wing, than that which he formerly occupied in the centre. Jackson gave another very smart exhibition, and again proved himself well worthy of his place. He took passes cleverly, and never made a bad pass, whilst his running and kicking was also effective. We have already spoken of Ball and George, the former of whom played without that tinge of selfishness which is sometimes apparent with him, whilst Walter passed more accurately than on Boxing Day, and was smarter all round.

Of the forwards, it is hardly fair to make special mention of any, without giving the names of the eight, but we may remark, as we have had occasion to do so many times before, upon the excellent dribbling of Healing, who was well supported by all his colleagues. Page, the brothers Williams, Jenkins, and Whitcomb, appeared to be working like niggers in the squash, and the heeling out was accomplished without allowing the visitors to break through.

The brothers Byrne shone out conspicuously for Moseley, and got creditably through whatever work they found to do. Rogers did not set the Severn on fire, but Hasluck accomplished some clever things in the defensive line. Dr. Robertson played a good game at half; and often gained ground for his side, whilst Goodwin supported him adequately. Their play was, however, crippled by reason of their forwards being anything but in the ascendant. The number of people who watched the match must have numbered six or seven thousand.

The following were the teams : —

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

Moseley. – J. N. Oswell, back; E. J. Byrne, F. Byrne, W. Hasluck, and A. Rogers, three-quarter backs; –. Goodwin and Dr. Robertson, half-backs; D. Nicol, E. Palethorpe, R. Palethorpe, E. R. Lycett, E. W. Lycett, W. N. Mayne, W. Dawes, and Lear, forwards.

- The Gloucester second XV. went to Birmingham to meet the A team of the Moseley Club, and, like the 1st team, secured the verdict by a try.

The game was a fine one, the play being fast and open. The visitors were somewhat poorly represented, but played with spirit and dash, Page in the forwards, and Powell, George, Watts, and Phelps behind, all distinguishing themselves.

In the first half Powell and Phelps each got to within two yards of the goal line, and Powell eclipsed these efforts with a fine run which ended in a try. This was not improved upon, and the rest of the game being evenly contested, the visitors won as stated.

The Gloucester team was as follows : –

E. Smith, back; T. B. Powell (captain), G. F. Dere, C. James, and H. George, three-quarter backs; J. Watts and T. Phelps, half-backs; G. Jones, A. H. Gorin, A. S. Page, J. Mayo, C. Williams, A. Morgan, and E. Dangerfield, forwards.