

GLOUCESTER JOURNAL

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1890.

The Week's Sport.

Again we have to deplore the ill effect of the weather in alluding to last Saturday's match between Gloucester and Cardiff at the Spa. On the previous Saturday, when only a small unimportant match was played on the ground, the turf was in splendid order, and the fine weather holding out it was hoped that equally favourable conditions would prevail on Saturday, but, as has happened on almost every occasion this season when an important meeting has been down to take place, the weather broke up, and, heavy rain following closely upon sharp frost, the ground cut up into a sea of mud very soon after the kick-off.

This, of course, rendered it quite impossible for Gloucester to indulge in their favourite passing game with any degree of success, and entirely spoilt the tricky dodging which is usually so telling on a dry ground, and at which some of the Gloucester backs are especially adept.

Of course the slushy state of the ground had a deleterious effect on the play of both sides, but, of late, the home men have shown a marked partiality for the passing and dodging game, and, in addition, their forwards seem to be considerably put about by a little mud, and those who have watched carefully the play of the city men will readily come to the conclusion that a ground such as that of Saturday is calculated to prove more injurious to the play of the Gloucester team than would be the case with Cardiff.

Put against that, however, the fact that Cardiff were minus the services of five forwards, viz., Hill, Nicholls, Williams, Bland, and Evans, and any advantage which might have accrued to the visitors owing to the state of the ground is counteracted by this weakness in the forward division.

Thus we have a grandly contested match with a shade the best of the play on the home side, but a deal the best of the luck on that of Cardiff – Gloucester on the point of scoring a number of times, but never meeting with success in their efforts.

Cardiff took the fullest advantage of one opening afforded them through Hughes, the home full-back, slipping in the mud when just about to collar the try getter. Hughes's foot slipping out he failed to get the necessary spring at the right moment, and before he could again get his foot to the ground, Arthur had gained sufficient ground to enable him to reach the line ere Hughes brought him down, with the result that he fell with the ball just over the goal line, and very near to touch-in-goal. The ball was covered in mud, and so heavy that Hugh Hughes was not equal to lifting it over the cross-bar, and the kick, though well directed, fell short.

The second half was principally in favour of Gloucester, and for the last ten minutes of the game, the result was by no means certain, as the play was almost continually within five yards of the Cardiff line.

However, "a miss is as good as a mile," and no amount of enlarging upon the ill-luck experienced by the home men will enable us to record a victory instead of a defeat, and the only way in which Gloucester can prove that Saturday's result was a violation of the law that the stronger shall conquer the weaker, will be, when it comes their turn to visit Cardiff to play the last of the four matches for this season, to reverse the order of things so decidedly that no room for doubt as to which is the stronger and which is the weaker team will be left even for the most ardent and biased supporter of the Welsh Metropolitans.

The forwards were very evenly matched in the tight scrums, but in the loose the home men dribbled more effectively, though the effect of their efforts in this direction was very greatly diminished by the magnificent defensive display to which the spectators were treated by Ingledew, the Cardiff half-back. Many times the Gloucester forwards broke away, but their progress was immediately checked by Ingledew, who dived upon the ball amidst the feet of the dribblers.

This performance he repeated so frequently that often the process of transferring the play from the Gloucester half of the ground to the other end was a lengthy one, and consisted of a series of short rushes which were always stopped in the way described.

Page played a grand game, and was well supported by Healing, Witcomb, and Jenkins, whilst the rest of the front division rendered a good account of themselves. Ball and George were much bothered by the heavy state of the ball, their passing being spoilt and rendered rather a means of losing than gaining ground, as, if an accurate pass were made, as was often not the case, there was always considerable risk as to whether the intended recipient would be able to secure it safely or not.

George dribbled very cleverly on several occasions, assisting the forwards materially in this department, and both he and Ball collared well. Jarman frequently gained ground by his tricky play, but did not render such valuable service to his side as his colleague.

Bagwell was the best three-quarter on the Gloucester side, though, perhaps, Brown played his style of game equally well. The former made some capital runs, and Brown saved rushes in his well-known manner.

Jackson seemed at sea in the slush, and neither he nor Powell did anything worthy of mention. Hughes was safe, as usual, and would have saved the match but for his misfortune.

Pearson, Arthur and Jones did good work for Cardiff, but Coslett was off colour, and H. Hughes played a sound game.

The following were the teams : –

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

Cardiff. – H. Hughes, back; C. S. Arthur (captain), F. Jones, T. W. Pearson, W. Coslett, three-quarter backs; H. M. Ingledeu, W. E. Jarman, half-backs; G. Allen, W. T. Morgan, J. Mahoney, W. Jones, C. Allen, E. P. Biggs, R. Thomas, and A. Lewis, forwards.

- The Gloucester 2nd team journeyed to Cardiff to play the return match with the Welsh Metropolitans and a fast and exciting game resulted. The visitors had all the best of the game till within about ten minutes before the call of time when Cardiff pressed and scored two tries in quick succession, but no goals resulted from the place kicks.

Gloucester experienced hard lines on one or two occasions, G. Jones getting within a foot of the line, while James dropped a splendid goal, but it was not allowed owing to the ball having been passed forward.

The Gloucester pack played a grand game and were a long way ahead of their opponents, Jones, Gorin, Dangerfield, Williams and Mayo playing in grand style. There was not much to choose between the backs on either side, Dere, Stephens, and Watts for Gloucester, and Hill, Merrett, Grogan, and Vivian for the home team being the best.

The following represented Gloucester : –

E. Smith, back; G. F. Dere, C. James, J. Watts, and A. Stephens, three-quarter backs; T. Phelps and W. Purton, half-backs; A. H. Gorin (captain), G. Jones, E. Dangerfield, W. C. Giles, E. Kilminster, A. G. Morgan, J. Mayo, and C. Williams, forwards.