

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1921.

FOOTBALL.

HARLEQUINS BEATEN AT KINGSHOLM.

GLOUCESTER TWO TRIES UP.

FAST, KEEN AND SPORTING GAME.

With Blackheath at Bristol and the Harlequins at Gloucester, the eyes of the Rugby world were turned to the West to-day, the meetings being regarded as a test between London and provincial club rugby. Only once previously had the Harlequins visited Kingsholm – on March 13th, 1913, when the City made a draw (8 points each) with the powerful combination then captained by Adrian Stoop, who had with him on that occasion four other International players in D. Lambert, J.G. Birkett, R. W. Poulton, and J. F. Greenwood. Since that memorable contest Gloucester had twice appeared at Twickenham, and triumphed over the Harlequins in each instance – performances which rank among the best in the City Club's history.

Last week the Harlequins opened with a wonderful win over London Scottish by 44 points to nil, and Gloucester (after the lapse against Bath) also achieved a splendid performance in beating Northampton by the substantial margin of 16 points.

This form indicated a battle royal this afternoon for supremacy. It was recognised locally that the Londoners had the speed and cleverness behind if they could get the ball, but the home forwards were counted strong enough to hold such a superiority as would enable them to dominate the play.

The Harlequins made two changes from last week's side. B. L. Jacot, the Oxford Blue, who cut his knee badly against the Scottish, had to stand down, and this let in C. E. Dardier; whilst B. Drummond took the place of Carnegie-Brown (indisposed) forward. Gloucester were as selected, the alterations from the previous week being at three-quarter, where Fred Webb and Sid Brown appeared in place of D. Brown (injured) and Washbourne respectively.

The weather was brilliantly fine, and there were between 5,000 and 6,000 spectators present when the teams entered the field to the accompaniment of hearty cheering.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : J. Collett.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown, T. Burns, F. Webb, and N. Daniell.

HALF-BACKS : W. Dix and T. Millington.

FORWARDS : S. Smart (capt.), G. Holford, T. Voyce, F. W. Ayliffe, A. Hall, J. Harris, A. Wright, and Major Roderick.

HARLEQUINS.

BACK : R. H. King.

THREE-QUARTERS : C. E. Dardier, W. R. Shirley, A. L. Gracie, and R. H. Hamilton-Wickes.

HALF-BACKS : H. B. Style and V. G. Davies.

FORWARDS : H. B. Wakelam (capt.), D. B. Drummond, E. H. Fouraker, G. R. Rougier, P. W. Adams, E. E. Hill, S. J. Rossdale, and H. P. Marshall.

Referee : Mr. W. H. Vanstone (Bath).

THE GAME.

The Londoners had to make a further change in the side this morning, P. W. Adams (the old Cheltonian) taking the place of S. P. Simpson forward.

Gloucester lost the toss, and the City captain started against the sun. The visitors initiated a passing bout at once, and the ball went across to the right wing, where the final transfer went astray. A kick down by King sent the ball to Collett, who fumbled badly, attempting a drop-kick but missing the ball altogether. A Londoner picked up and transferred to a colleague, who was, however, brought down immediately.

Play hovered in the home quarter until a great forward burst, headed by Harris, took the City half the length of the field. King checked, but was bowled over, and Gloucester continued to make headway. Off-side, however, gave the 'Quins a penalty kick, and a huge punt landed the ball in touch at mid-field. Millington and Webb were instrumental in gaining Gloucester a good slice of ground, and Collett, with a touch-finder from a punt out, gave Gloucester a good position.

Scrum followed, ending in the ball getting loose, and the Harlequins securing, Davies made a smart breakthrough, but succumbed to numbers. A free to Gloucester enabled Millington to regain the ground; but the visitors came back with some clever handling amongst the forwards. A big effort by Voyce, followed by a punt across, changed the venue, Shirley having to run back to field. He, however, got in a good return, and after an exchange of kicks between Collett and King play was centred.

The Harlequins were heeling smartly, and the backs threw the ball about, but close tackling prevented an opening. Eventually Dix started Millington on the move, and Webb, receiving from Burns, side-stepped cleverly, but lost the ball. The 'Quins tried hard to recover, but they were stopped effectually.

Then came a round of passing by the visiting backs, ending in Hamilton-Wickes racing down touch and punting past Collett towards the goal-posts. There was a fine opening for the visitors, but they failed to gather the ball, and Gloucester saved from an ugly situation. The City worked out to the 25, where they were penalised, Wakelam's shot for goal just falling short.

The Harlequins were showing smart football all round, backs and forwards being very fast, and the kicking being very fine. Each side came under the ban of the referee for infringements, the Harlequins reaping the advantage. A useful forward burst by the City made headway, but Hamilton-Wickes saved nicely with a punt to touch.

Millington was in the picture with a couple of beautifully judged punts which gave Gloucester an advantage, but it was lost directly afterwards. Roderick shone with a good bit of work in the line out, and Ayliffe and Holford progressed with some useful footwork. By this means the City set up a warm attack, but they were beaten off. From a flying kick over the line the visitors touched down.

Voyce received from the drop-out, but in trying to run round he was collared, and but for the alertness of Brown the Gloucester lines might have been pierced. Gloucester quickly worked back, but from a passing bout the ball was sent out to Dardier who punted high in the open. A visitor sprinted up very fast, but the ball bounced awkwardly and the City escaped. Play was tremendously fast, but the Harlequins were much the smarter side and had the better of the exchanges.

Twice Gloucester narrowly escaped after mistakes close in, failure to pick up losing the 'Quins good chances. With a combined effort from a line-out the Gloucester forwards went clean away from the centre and over the line, but they were called back, and the visitors were awarded a free.

The City front got going again with fast dribbling, and a long kick being misjudged by King he was tackled by Brown who had followed up keenly. For not playing the ball King was penalised, but Millington failed in his attempt for goal. Hamilton-Wickes ran the ball out cleverly, and with a left foot kick found touch in the Gloucester half. Here play remained till the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER Nil
HARLEQUINS Nil

The first half had certainly gone one way, and that was in favour of the Harlequins. The visitors had the pace of the home players in every department, and but for some reckless passing at critical moments might easily have had a couple of tries.

There was no reply to the restart by Gloucester, and play settled in the home half. The City forwards were soon in evidence, but they over-ran the ball, and then some weak attempts at tackling allowed the Londoners to make a lot of ground.

Mistakes by both sides spoiled possible chances of developing movements, but Gloucester were more successful later with a splendid break-through by the forwards. Gracie, however, effected a wonderful clearance when matters looked dangerous.

Off-side by Style caused his side to be penalised; but Millington could not get the direction with his shot for goal. The Harlequins pluckily ran the ball out, and the kick found touch well inside. From a punt by Shirley, Collett got across and fielded, and sent to touch with a nice kick – the best thing he had done so far.

From this point Gloucester went away strongly, and Voyce made a great effort to beat the defence, but was pulled down by sheer numbers. Gloucester struggled hard for a score, and a sharp pass from Millington on the short side of the scrum nearly did the trick. By a superhuman effort the Harlequins gained relief, but the City were soon back again, aided by a grand touch-finder by Collett, who was shaping confidently and well just now. A terrific forward burst just after was only stopped a few yards outside, and then Millington, from a pass by Dix, gallantly endeavoured to get through, but was tackled in time.

The game continued to be waged with tremendous vigour, the Gloucester forwards going great guns. A visitor kicked out to Collett, who took a drop for goal, but the shot went wide. Gloucester, however, were not to be denied, and the City exerted great pressure.

The Harlequins' line was again and again in danger, and eventually, from a kick over the line, Millington raced up and touched down for a try amidst a tremendous outburst. Millington failed with the goal-kick, though the attempt was a good one.

The 'Quins restarted, Brown finding touch nicely with his return. The Gloucester forwards were carrying the scrums now and heeling well. Dix and Millington opened out, and Webb brought off a clever run, but was again unfortunate enough to lose the ball. A big dash by Hall and pass to Ayliffe worked out a promising opening, but a visitor nipped in with a safe tackle. However, the move led to Gloucester securing a good attacking position, and a sweet bit of play between Millington and Dix sent the latter over the line, but a forward pass was given.

After this the Harlequins gained relief with some clever kicking, and the Gloucester end was reached. A grand run by Ayliffe changed the venue, and working well together Gloucester again attacked strongly. The City made supreme efforts to add to their lead, but the defence held out.

The Harlequins at length eased the pressure, and snapping up the ball in the open they had a fine chance with several men well placed. A forward pass, however, spoiled it, and midfield operations ensued, until Millington found touch with a nice kick in the 'Quins' quarter. King, however, more than recovered with some lovely return kicks.

From a line-out the visitors broke away, and a pass to a forward saw the latter race over the line. In trying to get round behind the posts, however, he was upset by Webb and sent over the mark, and a well-deserved try was disallowed. This was hard lines for the 'Quins, for their play had deserved reward.

There was no slacking up in pace on the drop-out, both teams putting in all they knew. A touch-kick by Millington and tackle of King led to a line-out on the Harlequins' 25. A sharp throw-out to Holford, and the International ran for the corner and got the ball safely over. Millington failed at goal, and then the whistle sounded no-side.

RESULT :
GLOUCESTER 2 tries (6 points)
HARLEQUINS Nil

REMARKS.

To the Gloucester team hearty congratulations on another great victory over one of London's premier combinations; to the visitors sympathy on being on the losing side after affording such an attractive and sporting game. There was no question the Harlequins won the hearts of the huge crowd at Kingsholm this afternoon for their brilliant open tactics; no matter if the play was going against them, their one idea was to give the ball air, and there was some fine football witnessed at times.

In speed, cleverness, and individual ability – especially in kicking – the Londoners had the whip hand, and had their passing been characterised with more finish I fancy the result would have been slightly different. However, missed chances are all in the game, and in the second half Gloucester undoubtedly experienced hard luck on several occasions.

To the City forwards the home team were greatly indebted for their success. There was no pronounced advantage in the first half, during which the visitors had more of the ball, but on the change over the Harlequins decidedly had the worst of the exchanges. The City pack got to work with a will in the scrummages, and their combined rushes in the loose were most effective.

Against an ordinary back division Gloucester would have won through repeatedly, but Gracie and his colleagues were wonderfully adept in picking up the ball and getting in relief kicks – movements which not only staved off dangerous attacks, but changed the venue of play considerably. Whilst giving full praise to the home front for their fine efforts in the second half, their display was not satisfactory as a whole as regards tackling. Time and again players went too high for their men, who too often escaped and either got rid of the ball to a colleague or punted to touch.

The eight had to put all out against a fast and determined opposition; otherwise the result would have gone quite differently. Individually, Ayliffe, Holford, Voyce and Hall were perhaps the most conspicuous, but Smart was always well up, and Roderick was a hard worker in all phases of play.

At half-back, Dix and Millington accomplished some clever work against a keen pair. The vice-captain did some of the best tackling seen on the side; he kicked with judgment, and managed to score his usual try. The best bit of combined work by the Gloucester half-backs, however, went unrewarded owing to the repass to Dix being adjudged forward. Style, the old Marlborough boy, shaped extremely well at the scrum, and Davies was not afraid to open out from any position. Usually, however, the Harlequins backed up well, and in this respect the City players could learn something from their opponents.

The Metropolitans possessed the smartest third line, with Gracie and Hamilton-Wickes a very dangerous wing. The Scottish International did not get in any of those corkscrew runs for which he is famous, but he was generally there or thereabouts when things looked dangerous, and he frequently got his side out of difficulties. Shirley and Dardier were not so conspicuous, but they rendered good service on occasions. The Gloucester quartette did not shine to the extent of their opponents. Webb was easily the most prominent, and he was unlucky in losing the ball after a couple of pretty runs. The wing (S. Brown and Daniell) did everything that came their way satisfactorily.

Collett, at full back, made a bad mistake to commence with, and he was very shaky for some time after. He, however, regained confidence, and in the second half got through some very creditable work. Experience is what he requires, and with that constant practice at finding touch. He should also try and use his left foot more. King gave a capital all-round display for the Harlequins, and though he misjudged the flight of the ball at times, he was quick to recover.

The game proved a most enjoyable one, and the spectators were delighted with the display . It was rough on Wakelam, the visiting captain, to be robbed of a well-earned try through going over the dead-ball line, but the Harlequins accepted the referee's decision in the true sporting spirit.

Mop Monday. – Gloucester v. Devonport Services, at Kingsholm; next Saturday, v Bristol, at Bristol. Both railway companies are running cheap trips in connection with the latter match. Bristol, I notice, lost their new ground record to Blackheath to-day, but this should not detract interest in the meeting of the old rivals next week.

W.B.

GLOUCESTER A WIN.

At Drybrook.

RESULT :

Gloucester A	3 tries (9 pts.)
Drybrook	2 tries (6 pts.)

JC