

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1921.

FOOTBALL.

LLANELLY BEATEN AT KINGSHOLM.

PENALTY GOAL DECIDES THE ISSUE.

A DISAPPOINTING GAME.

Gloucester and Llanelly are old and keen opponents, and the annual visit of the famous Scarlets to the city is always looked forward to with great interest. The Welshmen have put up some wonderful exhibitions both at the Spa and Kingsholm, and though the present combination may not rank with some of the "star" sides of the past, they still play clever football, and last week's defeat of Cross Keys was clearly indicative of the all-round abilities of the side.

It was unfortunate that Gloucester should have been so placed as to have to meet such a powerful opposition with a greatly weakened side. Voyce and Holford were engaged in the English trial at Manchester; Lawson was absent owing to injuries sustained in the county match last week, and Kerwood wired yesterday that he was unfit to play. Further, one of the reserves (Mountford), who did well at Moseley last week, had to cry off, and with Wright also on the damaged list the City were rather awkwardly placed. It had been intended to give J. C. Collett a trial forward in the A team, but Kerwood's defection put a stop to that experiment, and the old Bishop Stortford Collegian figured in his old position at full-back for the seniors. The other vacancy forward was filled by F. Mansell.

Llanelly were also weakly represented, both half-backs ("Billo" Rees has joined the Northern Union) and two forwards being away, in addition to Albert Jenkins, the Welsh International centre.

The revised teams were : —

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : J. C. Collett.

THREE-QUARTERS : N. Daniell, F. Webb, E. H. Hughes, and W. Washbourne,

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

FORWARDS : S. Smart (captain), A. Hall, Major Roderick, F. W. Ayliffe, J. Harris, S. Bayliss, F. Mansell, and C. Mumford.

LLANELLY.

BACK : D. Bevan.

THREE-QUARTERS : Bryn Evans, L. Thomas, T. D. Jones, and E. Morgan.

HALF-BACKS : Dan Jones and Cliff James.

FORWARDS : C. Williams, W. J. Jones, W. J. Evans, O. Rees, C. Ellery, E. Stephens, E. Jones, and G. Thomas.

Referee : Mr. A. J. Trollope (Surrey).

THE GAME.

The weather was bright and fine, and the ground was in splendid condition for a fast and open game. The attendance was not up to the average for a Welsh club match. Smart started for Gloucester, and early on the visiting forwards were prominent with a sharp break-away which was checked by Millington a few yards beyond the centre line. From the next scrum Dix got the ball away, and the three-quarters handled, Webb finally punting high to Bevan, who only got the ball straight to touch.

From the loose Roderick passed out to his backs, and Webb again put in a good kick to Bevan who, being pressed, had some difficulty in finding touch. Off-side by the Llanelly forwards lost them 20 yards, and Gloucester worked to the Welsh end. A nice punt out went to Collett, who marked well in the face of keen opposition, but his kick did not make much headway.

Another penalty was awarded to Gloucester for a scrum infringement by the visitors, Millington sending to James, who found touch nicely. The Gloucester forwards losing the ball in a scrum, the visitors dribbled away in dashing style to past mid-field, where they were stopped with a smart pick-up and kick to touch.

Llanelly, working well together, set up a smart attack through Bryn Evans, but the International was collared in time. From the subsequent scrum the Welshmen heeled, and a bout of passing saw Morgan go strongly for the corner, but Collett effected a fine save. The visitors continued the pressure, and the Gloucester line had a narrow escape, Webb being tackled close in. Hughes eventually brought relief with a short run and pass to Washbourne, who gained some 30 yards before being collared from behind by Bryn Evans.

Keen forward work followed, with the visitors clever with their feet and tackling closely. A free to Gloucester was finely returned by Bevan, and the City lost ground by the penalty. The City were now penalised at the scrum, but Rees failed to land a goal from a fairly good position.

On the drop-out Llanelly fumbled, and Hughes kicked through nicely. Washbourne ran up and took the ball, but Thomas effected a good save. Subsequent play was scrambling amongst the forwards, with very little in it. Once Gloucester looked likely to gain an opening, but it was missed. Then Millington, from a penalty a long way out, just missed landing a goal. Bryn Evans ran the ball out smartly, and later a visitor snapped up a Gloucester pass and raced clear. He fed Thomas on the left wing, who passed back inside, but the defence proved too good.

Up to this point play had been very disappointing, there being little open play, and what was attempted was rather feeble. At length out of some loose play the ball got to the City backs, Hall (who was playing as extra half-back) serving Hughes, who cut through beautifully, but held on a bit too long and was smothered.

Fielding a kick by Bevan, Webb ran and cross-kicked, and there was a good chance with the forwards well up, but the situation was saved. Dix, gaining possession from the next scrum, attempted to dodge over, but was held up, and then a lucky kick eased the pressure for Llanelly. Gloucester worked back through the aid of Hall, but a wide pass out to Washbourne was knocked on. For feet up Llanelly were penalised, and with a fine shot thirty yards out Millington landed a goal, giving first points to Gloucester.

Llanelly resumed, but immediately Gloucester were penalised for an infringement at the scrum. These illegalities contributed largely to spoiling the game. Dix misfielded the kick, and Webb also tried to gather, but knocked on, so that the scrum followed at the spot. The Gloucester forwards shone with a dashing burst, but the whistle continued to go for infringements.

A smart bit of work by Hughes and a big kick saw Daniell race down and secure possession, but in attempting a pass inside he threw forward with a clear opening. Gloucester lost their position owing to an infringement, and centre play followed. The game was keen to the interval, but the general play showed no improvement.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER 1 goal (p)
LLANELLY Nil

The game generally up to the interval had been of a poor standard, and neither side deserved a point. It was downright scrappy football, with scrum infringements so numerous as to make play a farce. Llanelly re-started strongly with loose forward work, but Gloucester were the first to open out, Dix sending out beautifully to Millington. Webb, Hughes and Washbourne in turn handled smartly, but the City wing had not the speed to elude Thomas, and was fetched down just after crossing the centre. Llanelly next tried a passing bout on the short side, but the transfer to the wing was a long way forward. Mid-field play followed, and then Llanelly again came under the ban of the referee. From a place forty yards out, straight in front of goal, Millington kicked his second penalty goal, and Gloucester were six points up.

Continuing, Llanelly showed up with a splendid passing run, which gained a good slice of ground. The Welshmen obtained a good position and were awarded a penalty, but from the favourable position the kick at goal failed.

Gloucester made a poor drop-out and almost at once Llanelly set up a hot attack. Twice the Gloucester line narrowly escaped, but a third attempt to score by the visitors was more successful, Thomas dashing over after a series of sharp transfers. The place kick was a failure. The last few minutes had provided the best football seen up to date, and it had been furnished by the Welshmen.

Smart resumed, and play opened in the visitors' half. Collett replied well to a free kick awarded the Welshmen, but later he was at fault in fielding a long kick, and Llanelly gained a footing in the City end. Here Dix snapped up a pass from the scrum half, but he was ruled off-side and a penalty given the visitors – a decision which did not please the crowd. Llanelly had a place for goal, but the ball fell short.

Subsequent play was keenly contested in the City half, the visiting forwards working with grim resolution and carrying several scrums in good style. Dix was penalised for picking up out of the scrum, but the shot for goal, on the 25 line, was charged down, and Gloucester escaped. Llanelly, however, continued to have the better of the exchanges until Daniell punted out to Bevan, who made his mark at the centre. For getting in front of the ball when the kick was taken a scrum was ordered.

The attempts of the half-backs to get the ball in the scrum was farcical in the extreme, and reduced the game to a fiasco. For the most part the forwards were mostly engaged, though some good kicking gave Gloucester an advantage. Llanelly, however, soon changed the venue with a long loose rush, which Collett saved in daring style. The visitors went very close after this and attacked sharply, but the defence held out. Collett, with a nice punt to touch from on his line, gave Gloucester a breather, but the Welshmen soon got back with a judicious cross-kick, Daniell being up just in time to turn the ball to touch.

Gloucester cleared through Hall, and Daniell following up well the game was taken to the centre. Here Millington was heavily tackled and had to leave the field.

Resuming, Dix started Webb on the move, and Daniell receiving the right wing brought off a splendid run. He beat the full-back by feinting to kick, but was collared from behind just as he looked likely to get clear.

Millington now returned to the field, and almost immediately Llanelly were penalised for off-side. With a huge kick Collett sent to the visitors' goal line, where Bevan was only able to get in a poor kick to touch. Soon afterwards the end came.

RESULT ;

GLOUCESTER 2 goals (p) (6 points)

LLANELLY 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

A most disappointing game, with scarcely a redeeming feature. The numerous penalty kicks and the frequent breaks up of the scrum owing to players not allowing the ball to be put in properly made play at times an absolute farce, and the crowd did not forget to show their dissatisfaction. It was the poorest showing I have seen from a Llanelly team, and Gloucester's performance was in keeping.

Forward, the City pack greatly missed the experience and ability of Holford, Voyce, and Lawson. The packing was ragged, the heeling feeble, and there was not that cohesion in the loose generally exhibited. Several times, too, the forwards over-ran the ball in the open, and allowed the opposition to gain possession and break away. If cleverness was lacking, keenness and vigour were there in plenty, but a lot of it, on both sides, was misplaced. Llanelly were a bit the better all round in the front, but the Welshmen fell short of the standard usually set up.

Behind the scrum were a few bright movements, especially in the second half, by the Llanelly backs, but penetrating power was lacking, and one solitary try rewarded the Welshmen's efforts.

Gloucester opened up a few times, but Washbourne had not the pace to beat his opponent, and though travelling well could not get clear. On the other wing Daniell showed plenty of dash, and he had hard lines in failing to score after that one fine effort of his. Hughes and Webb were fair at centre for Gloucester, but no single player on either side stood out prominently above his colleagues. The half back play was on a par, and was below what one would expect from first-class performers.

The referee was very exact in his conduct of the game, and dealt out penalties with a firm hand. Gloucester, thanks to Millington's goal kicking, reaped six points from their opponents' irregularities, and won the match, but I cannot honestly say the City deserved their victory.

Collett deputised creditably for Kerwood, but he still kicks with that one foot – a distinct handicap with fast forwards coming up on his right. He saved well, and twice stopped apparently certain tries. Bevan was generally safe in his fielding, and warded off threatened danger very successfully on several occasions.

Next week : Gloucestershire v Cornwall (county championship) at Kingsholm; Gloucester v. Coventry, at Coventry.

I am asked to remind local enthusiasts of the mass meeting to be held on Friday next at Kingsholm headquarters, for the purpose of forming a Gloucester Rugby Supporters' Club. All interested are invited.

In reply to a correspondent, G. Holford was first "capped" for England against Wales, at Swansea, in season 1919-20.

W.B.

GLOUCESTER A's SUCCESS AT BROMSGROVE.

Played at Bromsgrove. The tries for Gloucester A at Bromsgrove on Saturday were obtained by H. W. Collier, J. Hawker, T. Gough, S. R. Crowther, and S. A. Brown. Only one was converted, by Burns, the full score being Gloucester A, 1 goal 4 tries (17 points); Bromsgrove, 1 penalty goal (3 points).

The "Birmingham Post" remarks Bromsgrove held their own in the scrum, but found the visitors too fast for them in the open.

JC