

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1921.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER OPEN WITH GOOD WIN.

LYDNEY BEATEN BY TWENTY-THREE POINTS.

ALL SCORED IN THE SECOND HALF.

VISITORS PLAY BUSTLING GAME BUT OUTCLASSED BEHIND.

A welcome fall of rain during the night, followed by a cooler atmosphere, made conditions far more pleasant for football than could have been expected after the tropical weather experienced earlier in the week.

To-day witnessed the opening of the season at Kingsholm, Lydney, as last year, providing the opposition. Keen interest had already been aroused by the practices of the City team during the past fortnight, and there was a capital attendance of spectators at the Kingsholm headquarters anxious to see how the Gloucester Fifteen would perform as a whole in their initial match, and watch the work of the recruits introduced to the side.

These included E. C. Hartell at full back; F. Meadows and D. J. Brown at centre; and A. Wright forward. Brown had had previous experience of first-class football, but he failed to keep his place after a trial last season. The loss of the services of W. Webb – a distinct personality – and A. Robbins was greatly regretted; but the absence of these players gave the youngsters their chance, and it was hoped they would fulfil the anticipations of their friends.

At half and forward Gloucester were as before; and though Lydney – always a stubborn and keen opposition – were fully expected to make a good show, the experience of the City men was regarded as a valuable and winning asset.

The following were the teams : –

#### GLOUCESTER.

BACK : E. C. Hartell.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown, F. Meadows, D. J. Brown, and N. Daniell.

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

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

#### LYDNEY.

BACK : A. J. Kerwood.

THREE-QUARTERS : W. Miles, Bert Downing, A. J. Williams, and H. James.

HALF-BACKS : A. Jenkins and T. Wellington.

FORWARDS : F. Fletcher (capt.), H. Jones, T. Morgan, E. Gardner, B. Porter, P. C. Morris, E. Alsopp, and T. Parry.

Referee : Mr. J. T. Curtis.

#### THE GAME.

Lydney had to largely re-organise their ranks, the three brothers Biddle and Probert[*sic*] dropping out of the side. Prior to the start the Wagon Works Silver Band played a selection of music, and it will be in attendance at all First team matches during the season.

Smart kicked off for Gloucester, the return going to Meadows, who fumbled the ball, but recovered and got in a kick. This, however, was charged down, and the ball went down the field, where Hartell got across and saved nicely. Lydney, however, hustled along, and got well inside the home 25.

The City forwards relieved with a useful dash, and then Dix got the ball away cleverly to Millington, who sent on the Voyce. The latter secured a nice opening and threw wide to Holford, who had come up on the left; but the International failed to hold with a possible try in view.

Gloucester made two other sharp attacks through Millington and Daniell, but the wing man could not get through. The City were beaten back with useful kicking, but were soon on the move again, Millington executing a clever run and pass. The desired opening was made, but a forward transfer robbed the home team of a try. Gloucester were unlucky a minute later after smart work by Dix and Millington, and then a wild pass by Dix allowed Lydney to ease the pressure. So far the home players had not handled accurately, or one or two tries would have accrued. Still, there had been one or two movements which deserved commendation.

A penalty to Lydney was well taken by Kerwood, who centred play with a useful touch-finder. Harris and Ayliffe led the City forwards in a fine loose rush, which carried them some 30 yards. The ball was then gathered, and passing initiated, but it broke down. Some scrambling play ensued in the Lydney half, and ended in Meadows picking up neatly and getting in a good kick, but Kerwood replied well. Gloucester rushed back in good style, but when the backs attempted to open out the combination was lacking. A movement by Voyce eventually sent the ball over the line, a minor resulting.

Following the drop-out the Lydney forwards, with Fletcher prominent, made headway, but they were checked by Hartell. A free to Lydney saw Kerwood find touch on the home 25; but play did not stay here long, the visitors losing ground in an attempt at handling. Off-side by a visiting forward enabled Millington to find touch in the Lydney half; but subsequent attacks by the home players all ended in failure, judgment and finish being sadly lacking. In a heavy tackle Meadows was injured and had to leave the field, Hall being brought out of the pack to centre three-quarter.

Resuming the City forwards, with Ayliffe in the van, dribbled nicely, but Kerwood gathered the ball well and effected a good save. From this point the Lydney forwards came away with a strong burst, and the home end was visited. From a line out Voyce broke away finely and passed to Hall, who fed Daniell. The wing man dashed ahead and beat Kerwood, but was collared from behind. The ball became loose and was rushed over the line, D. Brown just losing the touch for a try.

Resuming, Hartell was at fault in misjudging the ball, and had to run back to save. This gave Lydney a good slice of ground, and they maintained their position for a time, Fletcher failing in an attempt to drop a goal. Gloucester soon went to the other end, but a visitor was allowed to get from a line out unmolested. After travelling more than 30 yards he punted over Hartell's head, and the latter only recovered right on the line. He was immediately tackled, and the City were in dire danger. Fortunately the situation was saved with a short punt to touch. Lydney returned to the attack, and another attempt was made for a dropped goal, but the ball failed to rise and went over the dead ball line.

As expected Lydney played a bustling game, and the City could not seem to settle down satisfactorily. For the most part play was scrappy, and little good football was witnessed. The visitors, however, tackled deadly and gave nothing away; whilst they were quick to seize upon the mistakes of home players. Just before the interval Daniell brought off a capital run, but fell a victim to Kerwood near the centre line.

HALF-TIME SCORE :  
GLOUCESTER ..... Nil  
LYDNEY ..... Nil

Gloucester's form in the first half had been disappointing as a whole, even allowing for the fact that it was a first time out. The three-quarter line had not shaped well either individually or collectively, and the absence of an experienced hand was patent to anyone. The forwards, too, had had none too much the best of matters in the rough-and-tumble which chiefly characterised the opening half. When the game was resumed Meadows was still an absentee – an unfortunate start for the recruit.

The chief incident on the resumption was a lovely burst by the City front, which at once put Lydney on the defence. The ball coming out, Millington cut through and yielded to Sid Brown, who raced for the line. Here he passed inside, but a visitor knocked the ball aside, which fell to the ground. Brown, however, pounced on it again, and was credited with the first try of the season. Millington kicked a grand goal and Gloucester were five points up.

The restart saw Hall in possession, and he tried to barge his way through several opponents, but was unsuccessful, and play settled in the home half. Gloucester quickly changed the venue, and there was a sharp attack on the Lydney line. The defence held out, though Hall and Voyce made desperate efforts to break through. The visitors eased the pressure slightly; but Dix worked out a nice opening, and, missing Millington, gave Sid Brown a chance. The wing man got to the line and appeared to have a try at his mercy, but he essayed a pass and the ball was lost.

Lydney now appeared to have lost control of the game, for immediately after their line was hotly besieged. The defence seemed bound to give way, but Gloucester fumbled one or two good chances. At length the ball became loose, and Wright initiated a round of passing which eventually gave Daniell an open line, and he promptly took advantage of the fact and scored wide out. Millington took the kick and landed another beautiful goal, amidst cheers, giving the City a ten points' lead.

Lydney resumed, and early on the Gloucester half-backs opened out cleverly. Daniell was given possession with a possible chance, but he failed to get past Kerwood. Wright was now off the field being attended by the ambulance men, and Gloucester continued with 13 men. The home team, however, were playing much better together, and following some neat exchanges by the backs Daniell forced his way across with his second try, which Millington failed to convert. At this stage Kerwood had to retire to receive attention, and Wright came back.

A fine run by Ayliffe looked like putting his side in again, but after making a splendid opening his pass went astray, and Lydney escaped. Kerwood now returned to the play, and for a time the visitors showed to better advantage, the forwards putting in some good rushes. For the first time this half they gained a footing in the home 25, where several scrums were hotly contested. In the end Gloucester were penalised, and Kerwood taking a shot for goal had the mortification of seeing the ball strike the upright and rebound into play. Hard lines. A minute later Gloucester had a free, and Millington found touch with a fine kick half the length of the field. Play was now scrambling again, with little effective work by the backs.

From inside his own half Dix broke away, and Hall set Sid Brown on the way, there being a fine chance for a sprint for the line with only Kerwood in front, and plenty of room to operate. But Brown hesitated, and eased up for the purpose of giving a repass. It looked as if the scoring opportunity would be lost, but Webb came up and took the transfer, and romped over the line. Millington converted with a good kick.

Gloucester continued to have all the play after this, and just before the end Dix scored after a nice run by Voyce. Millington kicked his fourth goal, and the end came.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER ..... 4 goals, 1 try (23 pts.)  
LYDNEY ..... Nil

REMARKS.

A satisfactory result as regards points; but Gloucester were late in getting to serious work. There was much in the game to call for criticism, but one forbears under the circumstances, seeing it was the first time the players had been seen out together. Practice alone will rectify the many errors in judgment and finish observable to-day, and in this relation all departments can take heed.

Lydney were by no means at full strength, and this fact must be taken into consideration when weighing up the extent of their defeat. The visitors were a bustling lot forward, and concentrating their efforts on loose rushing and kicking they managed to upset a good many well-conceived movements on the part of the City Fifteen. Fletcher was a keen and zealous worker, and his lead was well backed up.

Cleverness was not very apparent, but what they lacked in this respect was made up in resolute scrummaging and deadly marking. Behind, Lydney did very little in attack, and easily the most useful man on the side was Kerwood, at full back. In the first half, especially, Kerwood saved repeatedly when it looked odds on his line being crossed. His kicking and collaring, too, were first-class.

Gloucester left their best work till after the interval. There was certainly some smart work accomplished in the earlier stages, but the men finished badly, mishandling being a great weakness. At full-back, Hartell was only fair, and he will have to show better form all round to keep his place. His kicking was of no great length, and, further, he missed the touch line frequently. When under pressure he was in difficulties more than once, but to give him credit he showed no hesitation in going down to rushes, and his catching was clean. The question is whether there is anyone else better just at present. This is a problem the Selection Committee will have to try and solve at the earliest opportunity. Meanwhile, one would not like to judge a man's ability on one display – and that at the opening of the season – and Hartell might certainly be given another chance.

Of the other recruits, it was a pity young Meadows met with a mishap so early in the game. It looked as if his shoulder was damaged, and if this a serious smack he will be kept out of the game for a few weeks. Meadows started rather nervously, and that charged down kick right at the start, which might easily have led to disaster to the side, did not improve matters. In one or two other instances the West Ender shaped creditably, but he was disabled so early that one could not judge his merits.

D. Brown on the whole performed very satisfactorily. He put plenty of vim into his work, followed the play intelligently, and cut through once or twice in splendid style. Generally he timed his passes with judgment, and was less faulty than his colleagues in handling. With a top-top centre alongside him Brown would do better, and even lacking this support I fancy he will prove a fixture for the City.

The City wing three-quarters – Sid Brown and Daniell – did not make the most of their scoring opportunities. That hesitation Brown exhibited last season was noticeable again this afternoon, especially in the second half. More confidence in himself would carry Brown a lot further, for he has proved on the track he possesses the pace. Daniell is a whole-hearted trier, but he wants to practice the swerve and side-step to successfully elude the grip of a full back.

The defence of the Gloucester threes was not seriously tested this afternoon, but it appeared none too sound on the few occasions the players were called upon. Attention to this important department is desirable in view of the visit of such strong teams as the Harlequins, Devonport Services, Guy's Hospital and Cardiff.

Dix and Millington were clever and resourceful at half-back; and here Gloucester will make things warm for opposing sides. Dix has lost none of his craftiness and initiative, and the vice-captain took some awkward transfers and opened out with marked ability.

And Millington's goal-kicking ! Four out of five shots successful, and beautiful goals, too ! This is a good start, and I trust Millington will continue the good work, with the assistance, as placer, of his companion at the scrum.

Forward, the work of the City pack was somewhat in and out; but Smart and his colleagues should settle down by the time the "big battalions" come along. The skipper set his men a good example of fast following up and general play, and the City pack took their grueling well.

Voyce and Hall were prominent with numerous strong bursts, and Holford and Ayliffe caught the eye for good individual efforts, the latter shining with two capital runs. Had he gone on himself instead of passing on the second occasion, I fancy he would have been among the try-getters. At the same time, he did the correct thing in passing, though the transfer was not one of the best.

Summed up, the form of the home team, after the moderate start, was encouraging; but the third line requires stiffening both in attack and defence. The presence of a Fred Webb, Stanley Cook, or Robbins would make a vast difference.

Next week : BATH, at Kingsholm.

W.B.

JC