

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1921.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER'S SECOND DEFEAT AT HOME.

CROSS KEYS WIN DESPERATELY KEEN AND EXCITING GAME.

Cross Keys, leaders of the Welsh Club Championship, with the fine record of 13 matches won, 2 lost, and 2 drawn, were visitors at Kingsholm to-day, and were fully expected to furnish the City with one of the keenest matches of the season. Both clubs fielded strong sides, though disappointment was expressed locally that Stanley Cook could not play for the home team. Fred Reeves, the Welsh International half-back, was absent from the visitors' ranks, his place being filled by O. Hicks. The Cross Keys team did not arrive in Gloucester till 2 o'clock, and the start was delayed over ten minutes.

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : A. J. Kerwood.

THREE-QUARTERS : N. Daniell, F. Webb, E. H. Hughes, and A. Robbins.

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

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

CROSS KEYS.

BACK : B. O. Male.

THREE-QUARTERS : T. R. Benson, W. Burnett, A. Lewis, and N. Price.

HALF-BACKS : O. Hicks and Bob Jones.

FORWARDS : S. Winmill (capt.), S. Morris, L. Richards, J. Thomson, A. H. Evans, T. Pound, A. Blakemore, and G. Hathway.

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

THE GAME.

Gloucester lost the toss, and Smart, in kicking off, sent the ball to touch, and a scrum followed at the centre. The City were at once penalised, the visitors gaining 20 yards by the kick. Gloucester, with a loose rush, carried play to beyond the centre, and later Daniell, with a quick pick-up and short punt, made further headway.

The game hovered near mid-field for a time until a smart bit of work by Collier gained a few yards. The ball getting amongst the Keys backs, there was a series of exchanges and a long punt down the field, but Kerwood gathered and got in a good reply. Working well together, the visiting forwards got in a fine rush and took the ball over the line, but a Gloucester player kicked dead.

Restarting, the City front were prominent with a dashing burst, but they over-ran the ball and Cross Keys saved. Subsequent play was rather scrambling, but the few times the ball came out behind the visitors got it. Voyce shone with a sharp dash just now, but he was eventually pulled down, and more mid-field play was witnessed.

A grand punt by Kerwood was splendidly replied to, and little ground accrued to the home side. A penalty at length enabled Millington to gain an advantage for the City, and then Dix was laid out in a scramble and had to retire to the touch-line, Hall coming outside.

Resuming, the visitors opened out, but the tackling was too good. Voyce and Daniell were conspicuous with some pretty cross-dribbling which beat the defence cleverly. Daniell, however, just failed to keep the ball in play with a possible opening. Gloucester, with a grand rush, gave the visitors trouble, and later the City got close, but Daniell failed to take a low pass with a likely chance of a score. The game was very keen, the tackling especially being very close, but there was little open play.

There was some fine kicking by Kerwood and Male for their respective sides, and it was from a well-judged penalty by the latter that gave his side a territorial advantage in the home half. Dix had now returned to the field, but Gloucester were doing none too well in any department. The Monmouth forwards were getting the ball in the scrums, and from one movement initiated by Hicks the ball went out to the left, and then came back into the centre to Lewis. With a strong run the latter handed off a would-be tackler and, though collared on the line, he swung himself over the mark and scored a good try, which Male converted.

Gloucester restarted in dashing style, and there was a smart bit of handling, in which Webb gave the "back flip" to Robbins. The latter yielded to Hughes, who had come outside, but he was collared before going far. Splendid touch-kicking by Male gave Cross Keys a good slice of ground, and then came a fine bit of combination by Dix, Millington and Webb. The latter looked like dodging his way past the defence, but he was upset. Immediately after the Gloucester backs, with Voyce, took part in another bout, but the International's pass to Daniell was forward.

Fine kicking again brought relief to Cross Keys, where Hughes failed to gather, but he recovered and beat a couple of men cleverly before being "legged." Gloucester had the better of subsequent exchanges, Ayliffe doing capital work, but the defence was too good.

Millington, with a nicely-placed penalty, and later Kerwood, gave Gloucester a good position for attack. The City front heeling, Dix sent Millington away up the field. The vice-captain gave a nice pass to Hughes, but the latter was well tackled. Then Cross Keys were penalised, Millington just failing with his shot for goal.

On the drop-out there was a spell of heavy scrummaging, but when Gloucester got the ball out Hughes knocked on from Webb. A couple of minutes later the City backs were set going again by Dix; Daniell, the last to receive, punting to the line. Webb was up, but in jumping for the ball he knocked on.

Gloucester attacked strongly after this, and just before the interval, from a penalty kick in front of the posts, Millington landed a neat goal.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
CROSS KEYS 1 goal
GLOUCESTER 1 goal (p)

The second half opened sensationally, for after an exchange of kicks and a couple of scrums Lewis snapped up the ball in the loose and cut up the field. Facing Kerwood he cleverly cross-punted over the line, and the bounce of the ball beating Robbins, Burnett gathered and scored a try. Male made a poor attempt at conversion. Gloucester were thus five points down again, and it was evident the city had a big task on to achieve victory.

Re-starting, Collier came into prominence with a smart effort in the line out, but a visitor checked it. A little later Male cleared effectively in the face of the Gloucester forwards, getting the ball to touch in fine style. The City broke away again, but the Cross Keys backs easily checked with some admirable kicking.

Following a loose rush by the visiting forwards, the ball was kicked to the home goal line, where Robbins secured and punted clear. Gloucester were pressed for a minute or two but the City eventually relieved, and near the centre the home backs got on the move with a lovely round of passing. Hughes raced down to Male and then yielded to Robbins, who dashed for the line. He was tackled by an opponent who had come across, but apparently got the ball down for a try. The referee, however, ruled against the point, and a scrum followed five yards outside.

The City struggled hard to effect a score, but the tackling was very deadly. Then Gloucester lost their position in some loose play, a visiting forward dribbling away to the other end. Back play came to the centre, where Millington made a fine dash, but the pass went astray.

It was a ding-dong struggle for supremacy, the rival packs putting in a tremendous amount of work. The Cross Keys forwards were very dangerous in the loose, their footwork especially being very effective. Two or three sharp rushes took them well inside the Gloucester half.

Smart, who had been off the field for several minutes, now returned, and Gloucester were immediately awarded a free. Male put in a good reply to Millington's kick, and a forward burst by the visitors swept the field for 20 yards or so.

Cross Keys were penalised several times for off-side at the scrum, but Gloucester did not benefit a great deal from the kicks. From one return of Male's Harris ran across and started a bout of passing, but Hughes had the misfortune to stumble just as he was breaking through and the movement was stopped.

Inside their own half Gloucester opened out, and one of the finest combined movements possible to imagine followed. Millington, Hughes, Robbins, Dix, Millington (again), Webb and Daniell all took part, ending in the right wing scoring a great try in the corner amidst tremendous cheering. Millington made a fine attempt to convert from the touch-line, but was unsuccessful, and Gloucester were still two points in arrears.

The concluding five minutes produced very exciting football, Gloucester playing up with increased energy to pull off winning points. From the restart the forwards started passing, Webb finally punting to touch beyond the centre.

Cross Keys replied with strenuous forward work, and more than once the City had to be very wide awake. Once Voyce got back and effected a wonderful clearance, but the visitors came back and were in the home 25 when the end came.

RESULT :

CROSS KEYS 1 goal 1 try (8 points)
GLOUCESTER 1 goal (p) 1 try (6 pts.)

REMARKS.

It was a desperately keen and exciting game, and the last quarter provided thrills innumerable. Cross Keys won on their merits, for until the closing stages they had, taking play as a whole, the better of the exchanges. The City left their greatest efforts too late; had they opened out – forwards and backs – as they did in the last ten minutes, the result might easily have been reversed.

But we have to take the game as it developed, and Cross Keys did more attacking than the City, their two tries being smartly obtained. Gloucester's defence was not of the best when these points were recorded, but in the second case the bounce of the ball favoured the visiting scorer.

Gloucester's try was easily the spectacular tit-bit of the afternoon, and will rank among the best seen on the ground. It was hard lines on Robbins that he lost his try, for the effort that led up to it was finely conceived and splendidly carried out. But Cross Keys left nothing to chance, and their tackling all through was of the most deadly description.

The contest forward was terrific, and here the palm must be awarded to the Monmouthshire men for a great display. The City struggled manfully against the powerful pack led by Winmill, the Welsh International, but all round the visitors had a bit the best of it. Their superiority, perhaps, was more pronounced in loose footwork, and the many dangerous rushes they indulged in were a source of anxiety to the home defenders. Winmill and Morris were a sterling pair of workers in all phases of play, and Pound, Blakemore and Richards were another trio, fast, clever and effective in the tight and open.

Gloucester had two good periods – in the concluding quarters of each half – but the best work was late in the second half. Here the men opened out splendidly, and I could have wished they had started these tactics earlier, for it was apparent they would have proved successful.

Ayliffe, Holford, Voyce and Hall were conspicuous in the open; Smart was keen and fast on the ball; and Collier displayed most encouraging form. The pack was beaten for the most part in the tight scrums, though neither did a great amount of heeling.

Behind, Cross Keys had a very smart set of backs, who were safe fielders and kicked well. They attempted few combined movements, but they were quick and resourceful in attack. Lewis was the more successful of the two centres, and there was not much to choose between the wing men. Price, who is the son of J. R. Price, the old Gloucester and county forward, is a well-built young fellow, and shaped promisingly. The half-backs – Hicks and Jones – were efficient without being greatly distinguished. Male had an established reputation at full-back, and to-day he showed form worthy of the highest class.

For Gloucester, Dix and Millington displayed a perfect understanding in all that they attempted, and the latter also did some fine work in defence. The three-quarter line were seen to advantage at times, but lacked penetrative power. Hughes was frequently doing smart things, and Webb also did his part well. The wing men – Daniell and Robbins – were idle for long periods, but both were triers when opportunity arose. Kerwood did not find touch so well as Male, but on the whole his display was satisfactory.

For Monday's match with the Old Merchant Taylors, Gloucester will play the same fifteen as suffered defeat to-day, which means that Stanley Cook will not appear. The Old Merchant Taylors will be represented by : G. Sanders; W. M. Macgregor, R. K. Melliush, A. Hickman, and R. O. Lowe; J. R. Illingworth and D. H. Cockell; E. C. Archer, G. R. F. Bryant, G. H. M. Earle, H. H. Fagnani, J. A. Jago, "O. M. Taylor," A. T. Sketchley, and F. G. Tollworthy.

Of this team Sanders, Melliush, Macgregor, Illingworth, Archer, Bryant, Tollworthy, Fagnani, Jago, and Earle appeared at Kingsholm last year, when Gloucester won after a splendid game by 1 goal (d), 4 tries (16 points) to 1 try (3 points).

I heard on the ground this afternoon that the semi-final match with Surrey in the county championship had been definitely fixed for Wednesday, January 11th, in London. Surrey are endeavouring to obtain the use of the Twickenham ground, failing which the alternative will be Richmond.

W.B.

GLOUCESTER A OUTCLASS TREDWORTH.

FINE GOAL-KICKING BY BURNS.

At Saintbridge. Gloucester A started strongly, and Meadows scored within two minutes of the start, Burns converting. Tredworth put up a poor fight, and the visitors were all over them. Crowther, Hawker, and Curtis scored further tries, Burns, who was kicking well, converting all of them. At half-time the City Seconds led by 20 points to nil.

In the second half it was the same tale. The Gloucester Seconds heeled the ball every time, and Poole entirely out-manœuvred his opponent. The visiting backs played a good game, Hopcroft showing up well and being responsible for several of the tries.

The scorers in the second half were Crowther, Evans, Bayliss, and Wasley; Burns converting all but one.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ... 7 goals, 1 try (38 points)
Tredworth Nil