

THE CITIZEN

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1921.

FOOTBALL.

OXFORD 33 POINTS; GLOUCESTER 3 POINTS.

CLEVER HANDLING BY SPEEDY VARSITY BACKS.

VISITORS CLEARLY OUT OF IT.

After a lapse of eighteen years, Gloucester renewed fixtures with Oxford University in 1911-12, and one engagement each season followed in 1912-13, 1913-14, and 1919-20 respectively, with results as follows : –

1911-12, at Oxford. Oxford won by 4 goals (1p) (18 points) to nil.

1912-13, at Gloucester. Oxford won by 3 goals (1d, 1p) (12 points) to 1 try (3 points).

1913-14, at Oxford. Gloucester won by 1 goal (p) 2 tries (9 points) to 2 tries (6 points).

1919-20, at Gloucester. Gloucester won by 2 goals (p) 1 try (9 points) to 1 goal (5 points).

For some reason the University did not continue the fixtures last year; and application for a date by the City Club for this season was also unsuccessful. But when in difficulties owing to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, cancelling their engagement, the University turned to Gloucester with an invitation to fill the vacancy. The offer was wired on Saturday, and the City, anxious to get the Dark Blues on their card again, promptly accepted in return for a match at Gloucester next season. Thus briefly are the facts why Gloucester were engaged in a mid-week fixture this afternoon.

The University only started their programme on Saturday last, when they gained an easy victory over the Old Merchant Taylors, but the majority of the team had had playing experience with other clubs and in College games. The side included seven or eight Old Blues including Campbell (the captain), Forsyth, Jacot, V. R. Price, Maxwell-Hyslop, H. L. Price, and R. H. Bettington, and were regarded as a fifteen likely to develop into a powerful combination. Gloucester could not command full strength, for in addition to F. Webb, Holford was an enforced absentee owing to a damaged toe; and Washbourne could not make the journey. The vacancy centre was filled by F. Meadows, who, it will be remembered, damaged his shoulder in the opening match of the season with Lydney, and was kept out of football for several weeks. Gloucester were strong forward and at half, and Kerwood at full-back, on his form against Cardiff, was not likely to be overshadowed by Forsyth, the Scottish International. Gloucester fully expected to be extended, but it was hoped the forwards would be able to neutralise any advantage held by the University in pace behind the scrum. The teams were : —

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : A. J. Kerwood.

THREE-QUARTERS : N. Daniell, E. H. Hughes, F. Meadows, and S. A. Brown.

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

FORWARDS : S. Smart (capt.), A. T. Voyce, F. W. Ayliffe, A. Wright, C. Mumford, J. Harris, Major Roderick, and T. Tucker.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

BACK : H. H. Forsyth (Exeter).

THREE-QUARTERS : B. L. Jacot (St. John's), E. T. van der Reit (Trinity), V. R. Price (Magdalen), and A. M. David.

HALF-BACKS : T. Lawton (New College) and E. Campbell (Oriel) (captain).

FORWARDS : H. L. Price (Corpus Christi), J. E. Maxwell-Hyslop (Balliol), J. W. Robertson, J. C. Chambers (Balliol), Viscount Encombe (Magdalen), A. W. L. Rowe (Brasenose), R. H. Bettington (New College), and H. P. Marshall (Oriel).

Referee : Mr. F. W. Nicholls (Leicester).

THE GAME.

The afternoon though dull was pleasant, and there was a fair crowd of spectators. Oxford kicked off, and Voyce was early prominent with a strong dash from a line-out which gained twenty yards or so. The Gloucester forwards heeling smartly, Dix opened out cleverly three times in succession, but the passing movements did not gain much ground. Useful forward work by the University changed the venue, and Kerwood touched down.

Following the drop out the Gloucester backs handled cleverly, but Brown was stopped. A forward burst, however, beat the defence, and the ball being sent over the Oxford line, Forsyth only touched down in the nick of time. The University custodian was injured in his effort, and had to leave the field. Resuming Kerwood earned applause for a splendid touch finder, which kept the game at the centre. Forsyth now came back, and some fast play was witnessed.

The Oxford backs getting possession, there was a series of exchanges, but Hughes tackled Price finely and checked the movement. Judicious kicking by Lawton enabled the University to hold their own. Near the centre Dix sent out a pass to Millington, who missed the ball in trying to kick, and the home forwards dribbled away. A forward eventually picked up and threw out wide to Price, who though tackled on the line by Kerwood managed to get the ball down for a try. The place kick failed.

On the restart the Gloucester forwards showed up strongly, but smart handling by Oxford gave the City a lot of trouble. Kerwood, however, brought off a lovely tackle. In the subsequent play the Oxford backs indulged in more handling, passing and inter-passing with extreme cleverness. Gloucester were sorely pressed at times, but the defence held out for a time. At length a movement got the ball out to Jacot, and the right wing running strongly, handed off Kerwood and scored behind the posts for Lawton to land an easy goal.

Smart resumed, but Oxford immediately attacked, the backs showing fine form and having the pace of the City. A sharp rush and cross-kick sent the ball right in front of the Gloucester posts, and Kerwood being robbed of the ball, Robertson scored a third try, which Lawton again converted.

Thirteen points down was bad for Gloucester, but Oxford deserved the lead. The City made a sharp attack after this, but Campbell intercepted and cleared to the other end, and Jacot scored again, Lawton converting.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
OXFORD 3 goals 1 try
GLOUCESTER Nil

Except for the first ten minutes and just previous to the interval, Gloucester had been clearly out of it. Oxford opened out the game from the loose in clever fashion, and the sharp, clean handling and speed of the University backs proved too much for the City players. The kicking of the Oxford backs, too, was very fine, and often turned defence into attack.

Eighteen points in arrears was something for Gloucester to face, but the visitors restarted with great determination, and Millington early on only just failed with a penalty goal. The forwards rushing well, Oxford were hard pressed, but the defence was too strong. Dashing footwork brought Oxford out to the centre, where Jacot, with some neat play cross-kicked to Kerwood. The latter missed his kick, and the Gloucester line was in dire danger. The situation, however, was saved by conceding a minor.

Despite good work by the City front, the backs were shaping poorly, and did little when they did get possession. On the other hand, the University handled with great effect, and were always dangerous when on the move. Try as they would, Gloucester could not get their backs going with any degree of success. From an attack initiated by Dix, the ball went all right till it got to Brown, who failed to accept from Hughes.

A nicely judged kick from a penalty by Millington put Gloucester well down, but Oxford quickly relieved, and following some fine passing, Robertson scored, and Lawton added the goal points.

This further reverse appeared to put the Gloucester men on their mettle, and for the next five minutes the City had the better of the exchanges. From passing, Millington punted across to the line, but Oxford saved. Voyce next had a desperate dash, but was collared outside. Still keeping up the pressure, Gloucester twice had hard lines in not scoring. Eventually Dix fed Millington, and from the latter's re-pass Harris scored amidst encouraging applause. Millington failed at goal.

Some fine kicking by Oxford gave them the advantage on the restart, and fumbling by the visitors gave them an opening, which Bettington promptly seized upon, scoring behind the posts for Lawton to kick his fifth goal.

As far as Gloucester were concerned, the City were hopelessly beaten, as only a few minutes were left for play. A forward was injured and retired to the touch-line. The subsequent exchanges were even until Oxford broke away brilliantly from a line-out, not being checked until they were past the centre. Gloucester worked back, but brilliant passing by the University let in Reit, Lawton again converting.

RESULT :

OXFORD 6 goals 1 try (33 points)

GLOUCESTER 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

The magnitude of the defeat fairly staggered the supporters of the City present at the match, but one is bound to admit that Oxford fully deserved their brilliant victory. Gloucester were completely outclassed in all the finer points of the game, and the University showed football of the highest class. After a promising start the City fell clean away, and played like a tired team.

Oxford's superiority behind was supremely manifest. The passing and running of the backs was the best seen for a long time, and the kicking and general play was a treat to witness. There was no outstanding figure on the Gloucester side, as the whole team could not cope with their opponents, who were all speedy, clever, and determined.

A feature of the game was the way the University opened out from almost any position and several movements travelled three parts the length of the ground. It was a bad day for Gloucester, and the first defeat of the season was a crusher and no mistake ! Oxford naturally were immensely pleased with their great triumph.

W.B.

JC