

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1923.

## FOOTBALL.

GLO'STER'S GREAT FIGHT AT PORTSMOUTH.

UNITED SERVICES' THREE POINT VICTORY.

DASHING PLAY BY YOUNG CITY FORWARDS.

Gloucester were seriously handicapped for the annual visit to Portsmouth to meet the Services, a third of the regular side being unavailable. The absent players were Millington and Voyce (engaged at Birkenhead in connection with the International Trial), Roderick, Holford, and Hall.

Meadows filled the vacancy at centre, and the reserve forwards called upon were Carter, Hemmings, and Triggs-Herbert. The latter, who has recently come to reside in Gloucester, previously played for Cheltenham. The City team made the journey to Portsmouth overnight.

The Services fielded a powerful side, and had a splendid chance of recording their first victory over Gloucester.

Teams : –

### GLOUCESTER.

FULL-BACK : R. James.

THREE-QUARTERS : R. N. Loveridge, F. Meadows, R. Miller, and N. Daniell.

HALF-BACKS : W. Collins and E. Hughes.

FORWARDS : S. Bayliss, F. W. Ayliffe, T. Coulson, J. Merry, H. Collier, W. Hemmings, E. Triggs-Herbert, and P. Carter.

## UNITED SERVICES.

FULL-BACK : H. R. Graham.

THREE-QUARTERS : H. W. V. Stephenson, J. Burnett, H. S. Walkley, and W. G. B. Mackenzie.

HALF-BACKS : F. E. Chevallier and F. J. Butler.

FORWARDS : R. S. Benson, C. F. Halloran, R. C. O'Connor, F. A. Haines, C. E. C. Robinson, H. Thornton-Jones, R. B. Hunt, and W. S. Green.

Referee : Mr. F. C. Potter Irwin (London).

## THE GAME.

Gloucester were further weakened by the absence of Sid Brown, who was replaced by Loveridge.

Members of the County Selection Committee did not attend the match, as expected.

The weather was fine, but the ground was heavy in places as the result of a thaw. The attendance was about 2,000.

Ayliffe started for Gloucester, and the forwards, opening strongly, rushed to the home quarter, where the Services were awarded a free for legs up.

Loveridge failed to gather from a kick and was well tackled, but the ball getting loose Hughes broke away and passed. The forwards continued with a loose dribble, and an off-side tackle of Collins gave Gloucester a penalty kick.

Finding touch near the home 25, Gloucester confined operations to their opponents' quarters for a few minutes until clever footwork by the Services changed the venue.

From a cross-kick by Miller, Stephenson gathered, but the Irish International was well tackled by Loveridge. A punt put the Services close to the City line, but the forwards relieved, Carter taking the ball to Graham before being checked.

Dashing loose work by the Services recovered the ground, and later Mackenzie broke away, but was forced to kick. The effort led to a sharp attack on the Gloucester line, and twice the Services were only stopped just outside. Strenuous forward work followed, the City defending well against desperate attacks.

Collins was penalised for off-side play, but from a fairly easy place Halloran missed the attempt at goal. The drop-out brought no relief to Gloucester, and Burnett, from a pass by Chevallier, was nearly through. A neat pick up by Hughes and a pass to Miller enabled the latter to get in a good kick and, Graham being at fault, Gloucester took the ball right to the line, where Stephenson just cleared in time.

The City lost their position through a penalty, but the forwards worked back with great dash, and the Services were hard pressed.

The young City front were playing with great dash and resolution, and the tackling was close and sure. From a scrum ten yards out Miller tried hard to break through, but was held up. Gloucester continued to play strongly, but were eventually beaten off, and centre play followed. The Services at length got the upper hand, and Mackenzie was nearly in.

Subsequent play was exciting among the forwards, both sets doing fine work, and the game travelling up and down the field at a rare pace. The ground was too treacherous for back play, and the few attempts at passing broke down. Stephenson checked a dangerous rush by the Gloucester front by picking up in mid-field and bringing off a dashing run to the opposite wing, where he punted ahead, but James fielded and sent to touch.

Some desperate forward work ensued here with very little advantage to either side. Gloucester were holding their own against a powerful pack in a surprising fashion, especially in the loose.

The City forwards heeled, but nothing resulted from Collins' attempt to open, and the game continued to be contested with great vigour, each side in turn gaining a slight advantage. No score, however, was effected before half-time.

HALF-TIME :  
GLOUCESTER ..... Nil  
UNITED SERVICES ..... Nil

The second half opened with a renewal of the struggle between the forwards, Carter and Hemmings being prominent for Gloucester. With good footwork the City held the advantage for a few minutes but Burnett, with a solo dribble, led the Services back in fine style. Gloucester were in consequence pressed back right under their goal, where a desperate melee ensued five yards from the line, and right in front of the posts. The City were penalised, and from an easy position BURNETT had no difficulty in landing a goal. It was hard lines on the visitors to have these points recorded against them after such splendid work against odds.

Not discouraged, Gloucester resumed with increased vigour, and the forwards with an irresistible rush were not stopped until a few yards from the Services' line.

Twice the home team were lucky to escape, but after continuous pressure COLLINS bored his way over from a loose scrum near the posts. James had an easy place, but missed the goal, and Gloucester lost a fine opportunity of taking the lead.

On the resumption Halloran showed up with a splendid dribble for the Services, but Carter got back and saved in daring fashion. A combined rush by the City front, Ayliffe, Bayliss, and Coulson leading, tested the Services' defence, but Burnett gathered at their feet and found touch neatly.

A Services passing bout failing, Gloucester made headway through Loveridge, who kicked, and tackled Graham. This brought play into the Services' 25, where the forwards waged a strenuous contest. Gloucester held their own for a time, but a great burst carried the Services' men down to James, who took the ball well and found touch.

Gloucester got the ball out to the backs, but Miller could not get far before being tackled. The ball, however, rolled clear, and Burnett, who picked up, was immediately tackled.

A penalty against Gloucester lost the position, and James being tackled in possession by Stephenson, play was transferred to the City end.

The Services now worked desperately hard to gain the lead and Mackenzie was only pulled to touch a yard from the line by Carter and James. It was an anxious moment for the City, but Miller, with a useful effort, brought the necessary relief. Gloucester made further headway, but the Services returned, being aided considerably by a penalty kick.

Gloucester struggled valiantly against more hot pressure in the next few minutes, but the defence held out splendidly, though once Mackenzie was all but over in the corner. A few minutes before the end STEPHENSON scored a fine try for the Services, but the goal kick failed.

RESULT :

SERVICES ..... 1 goal (p) 1 try (6 pts.)

GLOUCESTER ..... 1 try (3 pts.)

REMARKS.

Gloucester put up a great fight and experienced hard lines in being beaten by a penalty goal. The winning try by Stephenson was a good one, and it may be mentioned that the Irish International had only just previously been changed over from the right to the left wing.

To the City forwards every credit is due for their fine performance. They were over-weighted and opposed to a dashing pack, but under the leadership of Ayliffe they accomplished wonders, especially in the loose, where all shone at intervals.

The game for the most part was confined to the forwards, but the contest was waged with so much vigour and determination that it was always exciting. Behind, the City players had little to do in attack, but the defence generally was excellent, and little was given away.

The Services attempted a good deal of passing, but the side seldom benefited, the handling being very faulty. Stephenson was the best man on the side, with Burnett very useful at centre.

Gloucester lost, but with such an unrepresentative team did remarkably well.