

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1923.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER'S THIRD SUCCESSIVE DEFEAT.

DEVONPORT SERVICES THE BETTER TEAM.

DESPERATELY KEEN GAME AT KINGSHOLM.

Devonport Services, who have enjoyed a good season so far, including capital victories over the Portsmouth Services and Bristol to their credit, were visitors to Kingsholm to-day. Last season the rival Clubs each won at home, the match at Gloucester ending in a last-minute triumph for the City.

Both Clubs were strongly represented this afternoon, though Collins (who resumed training on Thursday) was still unfit to take his place at scrum half. Poole deputised in his place, and at centre Fred Meadows operated vice David.

Roderick, who has returned to Gloucester, re-appeared in the pack, and despite all the rumours spread by the London Press, Tom Voyce was able to turn out.

The visitors' ranks included three of last year's England Fifteen – Gilbert (full back), and Luddington and Gardner (forward).

The weather was fine, but the attendance was rather disappointing for such an attractive fixture.

The visitors fielded as advertised, but there was a late change in the City team, Collier displacing Bayliss in the forwards.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : R. H. James.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown, T. Millington (capt.), F. Meadows, and N. Daniell.

HALF-BACKS : G. Poole and E. H. Hughes.

FORWARDS : G. Holford, A. Hall, T. Voyce, H. Collier, J. Merry, F. W. Ayliffe, Major Roderick, and T. Coulson.

DEVONPORT SERVICES.

BACK : Shipwright Gilbert.

THREE-QUARTERS : Capt. Baker (South Borderers), Midshipman Lee, E. R. A. George, and Capt. Sargeant (R.M.).

HALF-BACKS : Joiner Husson and S. B. A. Barrington.

FORWARDS : R. P. O. Luddington, Marine Gardner, Lieut. Fricker, R.N., Stoker Stabb, M. A. A. Kealey, Lieut. Crick, R.N., Leading Seaman Harrop, and Leading Stoker Broome.

Referee : Mr. Barry (Cardiff).

THE GAME.

The Services kicked off, and early on the home forwards broke away with a loose rush, but it was checked just over the half-way line. From the first scrum the visitors heeled, and George, receiving from Barrington, punted to James. The latter, however, fielded, and got a nice kick to touch. Gloucester quickly replied with a bout of passing, but Millington made a poor transfer to Brown, and nothing was done.

From a line out Kealey secured unopposed and ran a few yards, but was pulled down from behind and lost the ball. James recovered smartly, and found touch with a clever kick.

Play operated in the home 25 until Husson sent out a wild pass, which was missed. Voyce, coming up with rare dash, dribbled away to Gilbert, whom he pulled down immediately. Other forwards came up, and the ball was taken down the field, touch eventually being found at the Services quarter line.

Gloucester pressed hard, and for off-side the Services were penalised. Millington had a shot for goal, but a fine kick just missed. Following the drop-out, the Services reached the centre, where Voyce gathered and opened out. The ball, however, was missed, and a visitor picked up and punted across. Daniell, however, was on the spot and tried hard to clear, but was tackled and thrown to touch. Poole was prominent with a sharp dash hereabouts, but could not quite clear the opposition, and some even play followed. Play favoured Gloucester, and Millington had hard lines with a fine attempt to drop a goal.

From the restart Gloucester tried to open out, but Voyce had his kick charged down, the ball bouncing nicely for Barrington, who had a clear field. He was slow in making ground, and when he essayed a pass to a colleague the ball was knocked on. This was a lucky escape for the City.

The Services lost Luddington, forward, just now, but they kept Gloucester well inside their half. From a kick over the line Millington touched down. Gloucester were seen to advantage on the drop-out, a loose rush carrying them half the length of the field. Poole further improved matters with an overhead kick, and Gloucester attacked strongly. From some loose play the City players resorted to passing, and after a series of exchanges POOLE dashed over with the first try. From a favourable position Millington converted.

On the resumption the Services' backs were seen in some neat handling, but George was bowled over by Daniell. Fast, keen play ensued, in which the visitors showed up strongly in the loose. Luddington had returned to the field ere this, and Gloucester being penalised, Baker had a long-shot for goal, but a splendid effort just failed. James ran the ball out, but his kick was charged down, and but for the presence of Brown, Gloucester might have been in danger.

The Services continued to have the better of the exchanges, and the home defence was severely tested. Another penalty fell to the Services, and Baker had the ball placed for a kick at goal, but the wind turned it out of its direction and outside the post.

A combined rush by the City forwards was an incident of note after the drop out, Poole further improving with a lucky flying kick to touch twenty yards down the field. Gloucester were beaten back with a sharp rush, and even play ensued. Carrying a scrum in fine style, the Gloucester front bore down on Gilbert, but the International cleared with a capital kick. The game was desperately keen, but mistakes were frequent on both sides. Voyce brought off a strong dash across the field, but succumbed to a good tackle. In ensuing play the ball travelled up and down the field at a fast pace, the forwards on either side using their feet with great effect.

Millington twice pulled up dangerous rushes, but at length, from passing, Baker had a good opening. The wing man, however, punted instead of going on, and Gloucester managed to save. For the next few minutes the Services had considerably the better of the exchanges, and the Gloucester defence was hotly assailed. It held for a time, but after clever combination by the backs SARGEANT received and sprinted over in the corner with a good try. From near the touch line Baker landed a great goal, and the teams were level pegging. The Services had certainly deserved reward.

Resuming, Gloucester made tracks for their opponents' goal. From a line-out on the quarter mark Hall received and dashed away, passing to Voyce. The latter fed Ayliffe, who with a strong burst reached the line, but being partially tackled, lost possession, and the ball rolled dead. Gilbert was instrumental in changing the venue, and in quick time the Services were attacking strongly. The Gloucester line looked like being pierced, but sound defence kept it intact.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER 1 goal
SERVICES 1 goal

The contest had been waged at a big pace, and the changes in the fortunes of the game changed very quickly. On the whole honours were fairly even, though the Services perhaps had been the more often aggressive. Gloucester prevented a reply to the restart, and play opened in the Services quarter, but a sharp rush shifted the game to midfield. Here the visitors' backs were placed in possession, and Barrington kicked across, James being forced to run to touch ten yards from the line.

Playing with great determination the Services attacked with vigour, and the City had a very anxious time. George eventually had a drop at goal from close in, missed, and Gloucester touched down. The Services forwards were getting the ball back better than the home men, and Husson and Barrington served their backs well, but good tackling prevented the line being penetrated. A break-through by Meadows and a short punt gained ground, Ayliffe and Coulson carrying on the work. Gilbert was beaten, and Voyce challenged an opponent, but the latter got the ball away. It rolled over the line, Daniell just missing the touch before it went out of play.

From the drop-out some big kicking gave the Services a footing in the Gloucester half. The forwards, with a big rush, dribbled right away, but the City saved right on the line. It was a terrific battle for supremacy, but Gloucester's defence held out. Millington eased the pressure with a punt out, though Gilbert fielded beautifully and sent to touch with his return. The Gloucester backs had seen very little of the ball from the scrum, for when the forwards did get possession Husson marked Poole so closely that the latter could not get the ball away. The Devon County half was penalised several times, but this did not curb his impetuosity.

At length Poole was able to open out, and Hughes, Meadows, Millington and Brown handled in turn. The left winger made a gallant effort to cross in the corner, but was stopped a few yards outside. Gloucester, from this position, struggled hard to gain the lead again, but fumbling lost ground, and a nice touch-kick centred play again.

A free to the Services was well taken by Gilbert, James only making a poor reply. The game was in the Gloucester 25, when Poole started his backs going. The ball was handled sharply by Meadows, Millington, and Brown, the latter re-passing to Meadows, who went right down to Gilbert and re-passed to Brown. But with the latter going all out he failed to retain possession, and a glorious opening was lost. Gilbert and Meadows came into contact when the Gloucester man passed, and both players had to leave the field.

The game resumed with fourteen men each, Voyce coming out to centre for the City. The Services on the resumption broke clean away with a dribble, and sent over the line, James conceding a minor. Gloucester tried some passing following the drop-out, but it broke down at Millington. With dashing footwork the Services attacked strongly, and Gloucester were somewhat lucky in escaping a score. Gloucester eased the pressure for a moment, but they were borne back, and following a clever movement by George, LEE dashed up and fielded a short punt, scoring in a good position for Baker to convert.

There was only a few minutes left for play, and Gloucester made a great effort to get on terms. A big dash on the left promised well, but it was broken up, and then the visitors were penalised. Millington made a poor attempt at goal, but the visitor who gathered had his kick charged down by Merry and Coulson. MERRY picked up, and with a determined burst crossed the line, but Millington failed to equalise the points.

The last few minutes were very exciting, both sides battling with vigour and determination. A long kick by Barrington put Gloucester in the home 25, where from a line-out a visitor unmarked broke clear and passed to KEALEY, who scored easily. Baker missed the goal points, but the Services were five points up.

Just before the end Baker had a shot for goal from a penalty, but missed.

RESULT :

SERVICES 2 goals 1 try (13 points)
GLOUCESTER 1 goal 1 try (8 points)

REMARKS.

Gloucester failed to-day for the third match in succession, and there was no question victory went to the better team all round. It was desperately keen football, especially between the forwards, with the Services front claiming superiority in most departments. In the scrums the Services dominated the situation, and it was rarely indeed Poole got a sight of the ball. The local player worked hard, but he was up against a more crafty and experienced player in Husson, and the result was that Hughes got very few opportunities. But credit should be given the Services for their close marking and deadly tackling. Quick on the ball, the visitors seized upon the slightest mistake, and opened up the game smartly from the loose.

On the whole the visitors did more attacking, the forwards being very dangerous with dashing footwork, whilst the backs handled with more certainty and showed more enterprise. Not that Gloucester did not get chances. They had a fair share of scoring opportunities, but somehow things did not go smoothly to-day. The Services were three times over the line to the City's twice, but I was rather surprised to find the referee award the try to Merry, for it appeared from the Press seats that the Gloucester forward did not touch the ball down.

The Gloucester forwards were conspicuous at times in characteristic rushes, and one of the remarkable features of the match was the rapidity with which the play shifted from one end of the field to the other. But the Services were better together in general play; their ball control was superior, and they did not make so many mistakes. The City players were often trying to open out this afternoon, but the overhead passing attempted was often fatal, and with the ball performing "tricks" it generally resulted in ground being given away. Gardner and Luddington led the Services finely, and the Internationals received splendid support from Stabb, Kealey and Fricker. For Gloucester, Coulson was a shining light, and Merry and Ayliffe were also to the fore with capital all-round work. Voyce was well marked, but he got in some strong dashes and took a lot of fetching down.

Behind, the work of the Services was cleaner and more effective. Husson and Barrington combined much better than the Gloucester pair, and pluckily as Poole performed the City will gladly welcome Collins back to co-operate with Hughes. Collins, seen before the match, said he was practically all right again, and hoped to be declared fit to resume next week.

The Gloucester three-quarters occasionally showed flashes of brilliant play, but, taken as a whole, they did not reach their best form, the handling being faulty. Millington was not so consistent as usual, and Meadows did not handle with that accuracy he displayed at Oxford.

Gloucester's best combined effort was when Meadows and Gilbert got injured. The International had two men to face, and he charged into Meadows as he passed to Brown, with the result that both were knocked out and had to retire. Meadows sustained concussion, and Gilbert had to have some stitches put in his head.

On the respective wings Brown and Daniell displayed plenty of dash, but they were not overworked in attack.

The Services had a smart line of three-quarters, the players kicking with judgment and handling smartly. George and Lee were sound at centre, and Baker and Sargeant both showed a nice turn of speed.

Gilbert, veteran as he is, was of valuable assistance to his side. He misfielded once or twice, but generally he gave a fine display, and was much better than James on the day's play.

Gloucester have lost their unbeaten and ground records on successive Saturdays. The team's showing this afternoon was rather disappointing, and a big improvement will be necessary next week if Newport are to be held.

GLOUCESTER A v. DRYBROOK.

CITY SECONDS JUST WIN.

Drybrook entertained the City Second string. A close game was seen.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 7 pts.

Drybrook 6 pts.

JC