

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1923.

FOOTBALL.

TOM VOYCE'S GREAT TRY.

LEADING FEATURE IN CITY'S VICTORY OVER NEWPORT.

GLOUCESTER FORWARDS AT THEIR BEST.

Though Newport had been relieved of their wonderful record, the annual visit of the Usksiders to Kingsholm proved a strong attraction to Rugby followers in the city and district, and the biggest gate of the season attended at the City Club headquarters in anticipation of witnessing a close and exciting game.

Gloucester, after contesting eight matches without defeat, experienced a bad spell, and in succession the team went under to Abertillery, Oxford University, and Devonport Services. The form at home last week was especially disappointing, and a repeat this afternoon could only have one result – another reverse. With the return of W. Collins at scrum half, however, it was hoped a general improvement would be witnessed and Newport provided with a test worthy [of] the best traditions of the club.

Newport made three changes in the selected team. Jack Wetter played scrum half in place of Dowdall, Wyndham Jones went centre, and Trevor Jones and Mapson Williams took the places of Reg. Edwards and Tom Roberts forward. Collier for Holford was the only alteration in the City team.

After a fine morning the weather turned dull, and there was a hailstorm, followed by rain, just before the kick-off.

The revised teams were : —

GLOUCESTER.

FULL-BACK : R. James.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. Brown, T. Millington (capt.), R. Miller, and N. Daniell.

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

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

NEWPORT.

FULL-BACK : F. Baker.

THREE-QUARTERS : A. Stock, D. D. Herbert, Wyndham Jones, and G. E. Andrews.

HALF-BACKS : Jack Wetter and V. M. Griffiths.

FORWARDS : N. MacPherson, J. Whitfield, Tom Jones, G. Hathaway, Dr. W. J. Roche, Mapson Williams, Trevor Jones, and J. V. Waite.

Referee : Mr. R. Fear (Weston).

THE GAME.

A gusty wind prevailed, and Newport, winning the toss, took advantage of it. Ayliffe kicked off, and the visitor who received was pulled down directly he fielded, and play opened in the Newport 25.

For picking out of the scrum Voyce was penalised, and with the kick the visitors reached the centre. Here MacPherson headed a loose rush, and a kick through sent the ball straight to James, who found touch nicely. Some sharp forward work enabled Newport to make headway, but Gloucester retaliated and mid-field play followed.

Some close marking gave Gloucester an advantage, and then Newport were penalised; but James failed to find the touch-line, and Wetter replied with interest.

Heeling by the City forwards saw Collins open out, and Brown ran strongly, but his attempt to give a short pass to Millington failed, and nothing resulted.

Gloucester, aided by good work by Collier, made tracks for Baker, who was collared in possession. Gloucester rushed further, and Millington, getting possession, dropped for goal, a fine shot falling just underneath the bar, a minor resulting.

A big kick from the drop-out took play to the home 25, where Newport worked desperately to effect an opening. Wetter broke away and passed, but the ball went astray, and the City dribbled some 20 yards before being checked.

A free to the visitors changed the venue, and Gloucester lost ground in trying to open out. For pushing Collins when not in possession Wetter was penalised, but Baker's return put matters level. Hard, keen forward work was witnessed in the next few minutes, neither side being able to claim much advantage.

At length, from a line-out, MacPherson started the Newport forwards away, and they dribbled through to James, who saved, but losing the ball the Usksiders became dangerous. Voyce cleared effectively, but off-side was given against Gloucester. Baker had a shot for goal, but the kick was charged down. Griffiths, however, gathered, and there was a series of neat exchanges, ending in Stock cross-punting, but Millington marked, and with his kick found touch 30 yards up the field.

Gloucester made further progress, and a hot attack followed on the Newport line. The visitors cleared with a useful punt, but Millington securing, the City captain kicked across to Brown, who beat Stock and dribbled on a few yards.

Gloucester were now attacking hotly, and after a desperate burst the Newport defence was beaten, and COULSON credited with a try. Voyce failed at goal.

Following the restart Gloucester showed up splendidly, and the City were more than holding their own. Brown, with a neat effort, ran down touch and punted, but the ball went straight into the arms of Baker, who got in a lucky touch-finder. Just now Gloucester were clearly on top, and Baker again saved with a lucky turn of the ball to touch.

The City forwards, with dashing work, pressed their opponents, but good kicking brought Newport out to mid-field. Here the visiting backs handled smartly, but the re-pass went forward. From a line-out Whitfield got clear and passed to HATHAWAY, who, giving James the "dummy," neatly went over with a clever try in a good position. Baker missed the goal points, and the teams were level.

Newport had the better of the exchanges on the resumption, Millington saving with several forwards on top of him. Inside the home 25 Newport heeled, but Miller intercepted from Herbert to Jones and raced clear, with Voyce in attendance. Reaching Baker, a perfect pass was given to the International a few yards from the half-way mark. Getting his head back, VOYCE put on his fastest and best and, though hotly chased, was never caught, and finished up a truly great run with a try, which Millington converted. Cheering loud and long greeted this success, and it was thoroughly deserved.

Newport restarted, and at once the City forwards showed up with a magnificent burst which was not checked until Baker was reached. Gloucester kept their opponents in the latter's 25 for a brief period, but a couple of huge punts put the Usksiders in more favourable quarters. Gloucester were awarded a free, but immediately after Newport were similarly treated, and Baker found touch in the home 25.

The visitors made bold attempts to score, and their efforts were rewarded with a clever try by HERBERT after neat passing. The goal-kick failed, and Gloucester still led by two points. Gloucester resumed, and play was at the City 25 when half-time was called.

HALF-TIME :

GLOUCESTER 1 goal, 1 try
NEWPORT 2 tries

It had been a great game in the first half, and Gloucester just about deserved their two points' lead. From the first scrum after the restart Wetter opened out, and Jones and Andrews re-passed nicely. James failing, the latter had a possible chance, but was baulked just in time.

From this point Newport again got the ball out, but Herbert was tackled, and the Gloucester forwards burst away. They were stopped, and then Wetter, working the short side of the scrum, fed Andrews, only to see the wing man pushed to touch. Gloucester did not benefit much by a free, as Millington's attempt at goal fell short, and Wetter punted back well to touch. Splendid work by Merry, Collier and Voyce put Gloucester on the aggressive, where Collins fed Hughes, but the latter was immediately upset.

Play for the next few minutes was keen enough in all conscience, but was mostly confined to the forwards. Gloucester fully held their own in all phases. The backs, however, did not make full use of the touch-line. From a pass-out by Collins, Hughes gave a short transfer to Millington, who dashed ahead, but succumbed to three opponents.

Gloucester were only ten yards from the mark, and great excitement prevailed as the City pushed the visitors back to the line, but the defence held out. A mistake subsequently let Newport out of danger, and operations were fought out at mid-field. Heeling by the City front gave the home backs possession, and there was a splendid bout of passing. Brown tried hard to clear Stock, but was unsuccessful. Newport dribbled back, but fumbling behind gave Ayliffe an opening which he promptly seized, getting well away with the ball at his feet. Several colleagues joined in, and it looked as if the defence would be penetrated, but Wetter effected a grand tackle.

Exciting play ensued in the Newport quarter, the Gloucester forwards performing grandly. A perfect wheel of a scrum took the City front almost to the line, where a lucky flying kick saved Newport.

Almost immediately Gloucester were at it again, the home team experiencing very hard lines in not scoring. The conceding of a minor eased the pressure for a time for Newport, but the home forwards were quickly on top with some dashing loose work, and the Usksiders had a very anxious time. Wetter, tackled close in, was forced to pass back to Baker, who got in a useful clearance to touch.

Inside their 25 Newport started passing, but Jones fumbled, and Gloucester looked to have a good chance. The situation, however, was saved at the critical moment. Play still favoured Gloucester, but the City attacks behind the scrum lacked incisiveness. Voyce, heavily tackled in a line-out, was temporarily laid out, but was able to resume amidst cheers. Gloucester at once attacked on the left, but it failed, and another movement failed to fructify.

Still, Newport were kept penned well inside their half, staving off attacks by punts to touch. A loose pass by Collins went astray, and Newport following up closely, James was collared, and for the first time since the opening of the half the visitors got beyond the centre. Their stay, however, was a very brief one, for Gloucester soon changed the venue, largely through the aid of Daniell.

A penalty to Newport was splendidly replied to by Brown, and the City again held the advantage. The football, however, lacked real incident, being too close and keen.

Gloucester forced another minor as the result of a kick over the line, and on the drop-out Newport brought off a strong dash. The City replied, and the Newport end was again visited. The home team put forth strenuous efforts to add to their lead, but without success, and the end came with the second half a blank as regards scoring, though in actual play Gloucester had infinitely the better of the exchanges.

RESULT :

 GLOUCESTER 1 goal 1 try (8 pts)
 NEWPORT 2 tries (6 pts)

REMARKS.

Gloucester's triumph, though only by the goal kick, was thoroughly deserved, for in actual play Newport, especially in the second half, were a well beaten side.

It was a grim struggle, and in the first half the football was fast, keen, and fairly open, with many exciting incidents, chief of which was Voyce's great try. This was the spectacular tit-bit of the afternoon, and afforded another instance of the almost uncanny anticipation possessed by the International for an opening.

The Newport backs were passing well inside the home half, when Miller intercepted and was clear with only Baker to beat. But the centre wanted some backing, and the irrepressible Voyce was there to take the transfer which beat the Newport custodian.

Still, there was more than half the length of the field to travel to reach the goal-line. Would the International prove fast enough? Voyce soon proved he had the pace, and though two Newport players were hot on his heels they were unable to get close enough. One, in a final attempt to bring down the Gloucesterian, made a dive with outstretched hand to touch his heels, but the effort proved ineffectual, and, to the accompaniment of loud and prolonged cheering, Voyce finished his greatest effort at Kingsholm – or in any other match in which I have seen him – by scoring in a good position. Millington converted, and it was fitting that by these two points Gloucester proved the victors.

All the other scoring took place in the first half, and both the Newport tries were smart efforts; whilst Coulson put the finishing touch to a magnificent burst by the City forwards.

Gloucester had done splendidly to obtain the lead with the wind against them; they had only to keep up the earlier form to maintain it. And they accomplished this by some of the finest forward work seen at Kingsholm for a long time.

Newport struggled desperately, but for the most part they were overwhelmed, and were lucky in not having two or three more tries recorded against them.

If the football was not so entertaining in the second half, it was none the less exciting, the tackling being intense and the loose footwork particularly effective. The Gloucester pack let themselves go to some purpose to-day. What a contrast to last week's disjointed display !

But the City players were ever distinguished when a special effort was required, and they rose to the occasion in grand style this afternoon. Though Holford was unable to field, the City front had quite as much of the ball in the scrums as their opponents; and in other phases of play they often overpowered the visitors. Where all did so well it would be unfair to single out any individual player. There was not one in the pack who, at one time or another, failed to do something great; but what pleased me most was the dash, determination and cohesion of the eight as a whole. It was thrilling football, and to accomplish such deeds against the strongest opposition to be found in the United Kingdom added to the Gloucester men's reputation.

The return of Collins at inside half for Gloucester made for general improvement. He had opposed to him Jack Wetter, but the old Newport captain and International, though prominent with some capital work, was worried a good deal by the attentions of the City player. Collins whipped out some good transfers at times, and his play generally was sound and effective. Hughes did much better with the help of his old partner, and though not given much room to operate in attack he defended finely.

At three-quarter Gloucester failed to round off one or two capital movements. Millington cleared cleverly from several awkward situations with timely touch-finders, and his safety play was invaluable. Miller performed very creditably. I had been told his defence was shaky, but the young centre stood up to his work well to-day; and the importance of the occasion did not unnerve him.

Sid Brown played attractive football, exhibiting plenty of dash and never being at a loss to know what to do. The combination of the line was at fault at times, but one must allow for the close marking and deadly tackling which was a prominent feature of both sides.

The Newport backs were one of the weakest divisions they have fielded at Kingsholm for some years. Wetter showed signs of "wear and tear," and cannot cover the ground as he used to do; whilst Griffiths failed to sustain the reputation he earned at the outset of the season. The three-quarters, too, fumbled continually and no player was outstanding. Baker, for a probable International, was a big dis-appointment. He started shakily, and never touched the standard he has set up for himself in Wales. James, too, had his off periods.

Forward, Newport played as well as they were allowed to. MacPherson was the leader of some dashing loose rushes, and in the lines-out the Scottish International (who has loomed largely of late in Rugby circles) was also distinguished. But the visiting pack were more than held by the Gloucester eight, and that second half exhibition emphasised this contention.

Well played, Gloucester! It was a fine win, and atoned for last week's defeat.

Next week : Gloucestershire v. Somerset, at Bristol; Gloucester v. Cheltenham, at Cheltenham.

GLOUCESTER A v. NEWPORT A.

CITY RESERVES' GALLANT FIGHT.

At Newport. The first half was not conspicuous for brilliant play. Hawker, the Gloucester centre, lost a splendid chance to score by an indiscreet kick when the home line was at his mercy. Mansell, Reed and Webb brought off a fine dribble for the visitors. Hodges and Smith scored for Newport, Hodges converting one.

HALF-TIME :

Newport A 1 goal, 1 try

Gloucester A Nil

In the second half, Crowther scored early for the City and Hawker converted. Hawker also kicked a penalty goal. Hodges scored an unconverted try for Newport.

Lysaght and Pile were the best of the Newport forwards and Rea and Webb, for Gloucester.

RESULT :

Newport 1 goal, 2 tries (11 pts)

Gloucester 1 goal, 1 try (8 pts)