

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1923.

FIRST FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER TRIUMPH AT NORTHAMPTON.

THIRD MINUTE TRY SETTLES THE ISSUE.

A DESPERATELY KEEN ENCOUNTER.

After the lapse of a season fixtures were resumed between Gloucester and Northampton, the City team appearing at Franklin's Gardens for the first match to-day. There has been a great change in the personnel of both teams since the last meeting at Northampton in 1921, when Gloucester gained a handsome victory by 5 goals (1d) (24 points) to 2 goals (1p) (8 points). Of the successful fifteen on that occasion only Millington, Daniell, Holford, Voyce, and Hall were included in the City ranks this afternoon; whilst for Northampton, Bull, Binyon, Sambrook, Luck, Griffin, Tebbitt, and Denton alone remained.

Gloucester's form in the opening matches at Kingsholm this season was such as to give every hope of a victorious result to-day, despite Northampton's easy win at the expense of Birmingham last week. The home team was weakened by the absence of Vaughan, at full-back, who had to stand down owing to a torn ligament at the back of one of his ankles – an injury which is likely to keep the old Pontypool custodian out of the game for a month.

Gloucester, too, had to make changes from the original selection. Stone and Ayliffe (with a damaged knee) were both unable to play. The vacancy at centre was filled by F. Meadows; whilst Holford came in at forward.

H. S. Dyer, late of Plymouth Albion and Devon County, who has secured a business appointment in Northampton, took Vaughan's place at full back. Following a bright morning, the weather became dull, and there was a heavy rainstorm just previous to the start. The attendance was under 2,000.

Teams : –

#### GLOUCESTER.

BACK: R. James.

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

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

FORWARDS: A. Hall, T. Voyce, S. Bayliss, T. Coulson, P. Carter, J. Merry, H. W. Collier, and G. Holford.

#### NORTHAMPTON.

BACK: H. S. Dyer.

THREE-QUARTERS: F. W. Layman, H. A. Sambrook, E. D. Roberts, and M. P. Barrow.

HALF-BACKS: C. J. Farr and F. Turnbull; E. R. Uren (five-eighth).

FORWARDS: Dr. A. G. Bull, J. C. Binyon, Capt. J. C. Mackenzie, H. Griffin, A. E. Luck, J. B. Merry, C. P. Tebbitt, and G. Denton.

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

#### THE GAME.

Luck kicked off for the home team, and the opening play was contested at the centre. Each side was early at fault with a greasy ball, but from the first set scrum Gloucester heeled, and lovely passing between Collins, Hughes and Millington saw the captain cut clean through and up to Dyer. A perfect transfer followed to BROWN, who raced over with the first try in less than three minutes. Millington failed at goal.

Northampton resumed strongly, and Dyer fielding a kick down by Merry effected a capital clearance. Northampton pressed cleverly with neat work, but the tackling was sound.

Mistakes in handling were frequent, and spoiled open play. Hughes, intercepting cleverly, gave Gloucester a good slice of ground, and further progress was made later. Play was keen and fast, with little advantage to either side.

Northampton with good forward work changed the venue, and Sambrook kicked over the line. James attempted to punt out, but screwed the ball almost to touch-in-goal. This placed the City in a dangerous position, and only a heroic defence saved the situation. Millington with a fine kick eased the pressure, and the game was hotly contested at midfield.

Dyer saved twice in the face of desperate forward rushes by the City pack, and later gained 30 yards with a beautiful touch-finder. Hughes, with a brilliant run up the field, slipped the defence cleverly, but Voyce, to whom he passed, was pulled down. Another penalty, nicely taken by Dyer, put Northampton well down.

James made a good mark when pressed, and with his kick cleared. Penalties followed to each side for legs up, which left the game pretty even. Then Sambrook picked up in the loose, and ran clean through the City players. When tackled by James he passed to Binyon, and the latter gave to Layman close in, but the wing man was pushed to touch-in-goal – a lucky escape for the visitors.

Mistakes in fielding by the home backs gave Gloucester a footing in the Northampton 25, and a minor was conceded from a charged down kick. James replied finely to the drop-out, and Hughes, from a pass by Collins, was nearly through. A penalty eased the position for Northampton, but a cross-kick by Daniell put the City in a good position.

This, however, was lost, and James was called upon to check a loose forward rush, which he did effectively. Millington further improved. Northampton attacked strongly after this, and twice they nearly scored. Meadows, intercepting a pass, ran to Dyer with a clear field for Daniell, but the home custodian anticipated the pass, and going all out effected a grand tackle of the Gloucester right-winger.

HALF-TIME SCORE:  
GLOUCESTER.....1 try  
NORTHAMPTON.....Nil

Northampton had played up surprisingly well, and the City had had to exert their hardest and best to maintain their three points' lead. Resuming, smart work by Voyce led to Gloucester gaining an advantage, but it was short-lived, and a big kick enabled Northampton to transfer play to beyond half-way.

The City forwards with strong loose rushes regained the lost territory, but they had later to pay the penalty for being off-side. Subsequent play was waged at a terrific pace, and no quarter was given in tackling. Brown brought off a pretty run and pass, but a smothering tackle saved the situation. From a line-out Sambrook broke away and kicked, but the ball went dead.

Gloucester found the game going against them during the next few minutes, and the defence was sorely tested. For off-side the City were penalised inside their quarter, but Dyer's shot for goal went wide. The drop-out brought no relief, and the game continued in the Gloucester half. It was desperately keen football, and the close character of play made it very exciting.

Gloucester heeled, and the backs tried passing, but it broke down. Northampton replied with a really clever bout, Uren and Barron passing and interpassing, but the visitors just saved. So far Gloucester had had all the worst of this half, and Northampton were unlucky in not having opened their account.

A good run by Brown brought much-needed relief, and for a time the visitors did better, but they never got going properly. A long dribble by the home forwards beat the defence and sent the ball over the line, where a touch-down was conceded. Following the drop-out, Gloucester reached midfield, but for infringements they were twice penalised, and Dyer with a splendid kick gave his side the advantage.

In later play the Gloucester tackling left something to be desired, the men being allowed to slip through the defence far too easily. By dint of vigorous forward work and useful kicking the City reached their opponents' half for the first time since the restart, but the position was quickly lost. Layman and Sambrook on the left took Northampton right down, where Holford saved near the line. Gloucester were in danger for a couple of minutes, but the defence held out. The City eventually came away to the centre, where Hughes picked up and cut out a nice opening for Brown, and the latter made a real effort to get over, but was caught just outside and thrown into touch-in-goal.

During the last five minutes Gloucester showed up much better and tried hard to force another score. Northampton, however, offered a determined resistance, and the end came with Gloucester winners.

RESULT:

GLOUCESTER.....1 try (3 points)  
NORTHAMPTON.....Nil

REMARKS.

To be candid, Gloucester were lucky in earning winning honours to-day, for in the greater part of the second half Northampton were clearly on top, and their repeated attacks deserved reward. It was a real needle contest throughout, and both sides were all out.

With the ground and ball greasy, mistakes in handling were excusable, but despite the conditions some clever work was accomplished, and the City's one and only try was a perfect bit of combination.

Forward, it was a red-hot struggle, and Gloucester by no means had the best of matters, especially in the loose. Hall played outside most of the second half, and he was wanted there to keep in check the impetuous rushes of the home front.

At half, Collins and Hughes both did well, the latter cutting out one or two nice openings. In the third line Millington and Brown were the best. James did better than in previous games, but he was outshone by Dyer, who was brilliant at times. Uren and Sambrook were continually prominent behind for Northampton.

Towards the finish things got very exciting, and the referee had to intervene. Gloucester won, but a draw would have best represented the run of the game.

Next week: London Harlequins; at Kingsholm.

JC