

THE CITIZEN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1923.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER'S ONE POINT VICTORY.

TAYLORS BEATEN ON CALL OF TIME.

FAST AND INTERESTING GAME.

Gloucester were again weakly represented for this popular Boxing Day fixture, the absentees including Voyce, Ayliffe, Roderick, Holford, and Hall. The team was not completed at the time of the kick-off, and only fourteen players fielded. The weather was dull and cold, and though there was a good crowd present, the attendance was below the average for this holiday match.

GLOUCESTER.

FULL-BACK : R. James.

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

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

FORWARDS : A. Rea, J. Hemmings, T. Coulson, J. Merry, G. Manns, P. Carter, S. Bayliss, and another.

OLD MERCHANT TAYLORS.

FULL-BACK : R. K. Melliush.

THREE-QUARTERS : B. Bywater, W. I. Cheesman, F. Spragg, and W. A. McGregor.

HALF-BACKS : F. H. Collier and D. Norton.

FORWARDS : R. Cove-Smith, F. H. Bryant, R. F. McLennan, R. F. Tebbutt, G. H. Earle, E. C. Archer, H. H. Fagnani, and G. F. Taylor.

Referee : Mr. F. W. Birt (Newport).

THE GAME.

The teams had a hearty reception from the spectators, and the band played "Ault Lang Syne." Millington kicked off, and the ball going to touch a scrum was ordered at the centre. Gloucester were early awarded a penalty, and the return being charged down the Taylors were at once pressed. Hughes was prominent with a clever burst on the short side, but was held up in time.

Useful kicks by the visitors brought play to the centre, where the Taylors made headway from a line-out. The Gloucester team was now completed. Play hovered in the Gloucester half for a couple of minutes until off-side by the Taylors cost them a penalty. With the kick Millington found touch at midfield, where a hot contest was waged forward.

From a scrum, Collins served Hughes, and a perfect round of passing gave BROWN a splendid chance on the left. The Gloucesterian cut his opponent nicely, and going all out scored a fine try, which Millington failed to convert.

Resuming, the Taylors showed up with a series of exchanges, more than half the team handling until a forward pass to the wing checked it. The crowd cheered the visitors heartily for this splendid bit of play, and the applause was renewed when some more pretty work was indulged in.

There was a slight stoppage for an injury to a Taylor, and when the game was resumed the Gloucester backs again passed beautifully. This time Miller was sent away, but he was hemmed in, and there was no colleagues to pass to[sic].

Ensuing play was bright and open, and greatly pleased the crowd. Hughes was prominent with a fine individual run which took him to Melliush, when he was laid low.

A punt from Collins to the visiting custodian was well returned to touch at the Gloucester 25, and from this point the Old Boys attacked strongly. From one movement the visitors had a splendid opening, but McGregor was well tackled by James. Still the effort led to a hot attack on the home line, and from a scrum Collier fed McGREGOR, who dashed over with a corner try. Cheesman failed at goal, and the teams were level.

Gloucester re-started, and heeling by the City forwards saw Collins serve Hughes with a nice reverse pass, but the movement broke down and ground was lost. The home front were getting possession much better to-day, and Hughes fed his threes well, but close tackling by Cheesman and Spragg prevented an opening accruing. By strong work in the line-out the Taylors secured an advantage, but Gloucester saved, thanks to a clever kick by Millington. Play was fast and keen, and slightly in favour of the Taylors.

A lucky flying kick across the field was just missed by Miller, but fortunately for the home team the ball went to touch. In some loose play the City forwards broke clear, and Melliush failing to field, Coulson gathered and passed to CARTER, who romped over with a good try. No goal resulted.

Having secured the lead again the City resumed strongly, but the Taylors responded with some fine open work, McGregor falling to a grand tackle by James. A timely punt to touch brought relief to Gloucester. Hughes further improved with a dodgy run and pass which enabled the home team to reach midfield. Here operations remained for a few minutes, until the visitors were penalised for off-side.

Following an exchange of kicks, James followed up and charged down Melliush's reply, the ball rebounding to touch inside the Taylors' 25. A clever solo dribble by Collier changed the venue to the centre, where the game was when the interval arrived.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER 2 tries
O. M. TAYLORS 1 try

The football displayed had been a distinct improvement on recent exhibitions, being fast and open with plenty of clever play on both sides. The Taylors restarted, and the first incident of note was a grand combined rush by the City forwards, which took them well inside their opponents' half before being checked.

The Taylors quickly changed the venue with dashing forward work, only to get offside and give Gloucester a penalty. Millington made 20 yards with the resultant kick, after which Collins and Hughes opened out on the right. The passing went wrong, but Miller recovered splendidly, and brought off a capital run. He punted over Melliush's head, but was unfortunate in not recovering owing to the ball bouncing the wrong way.

Gloucester lost Miller injured, but the City had the better of subsequent exchanges. Only a minor, however, rewarded their efforts. Miller now came back, and the team renewed the struggle with increase vigour.

The City with dashing work pressed, but could not pierce the defence. The Taylors, with some fine footwork, twice brought relief, and clever handling also tested the defence, but the tackling was sound. A well-judged penalty kick by Cheesman put the Taylors well down, and the forwards heeling there was a lovely bout of passing. McGREGOR, the last to receive, was challenged, but he eluded the defender, and raced over with a good try. In trying to get behind the posts he was charged over by Millington, and temporarily laid out. Cheesman took the shot for goal, and just managed to send the ball inside the upright, thus giving the visitors a two-points lead.

Gloucester resumed, and the game became very exciting. For an infringement at the scrum the Taylors were penalised, and Millington had a place for goal, but the shot was wide and short. Gloucester played with great determination for the lead, and Brown placed his side close to the line with a well-judged punt. From the next scrum Collins got the ball away, but Millington missed from Hughes, and the Taylors saved.

The Taylors worked out from a dangerous position, but two penalties sent them back, Millington making one splendid shot for goal. Carter lost the City their attacking position with a long pass out to the wing, the ball being captured by a visitor, who ran well out. Midfield play followed, with honours fairly easy. The Gloucester forwards were playing with plenty of dash, but the backs were not finished enough to do any scoring. It was rousing football, but in the gathering dusk it was impossible to follow the play closely.

The Taylors gained a footing in the home 25, but the Gloucester backs came away with a passing bout, which left the ball with Brown. The left winger ran hard and punted, but was unable to get up in time to gather. The effort, however, gave Gloucester a last chance to save the game. Gloucester got the ball out, and Collins deceived the opposition with a reverse pass. Millington and Meadows handled, and the ball went out to Miller, who apparently knocked on in trying to gather. The referee, however, did not whistle, and MILLER, picking up, skirted past Bywater and scored wide out. Millington failed at goal, but Gloucester had secured a point lead.

The Taylors, robbed in the last minute of victory, restarted, but soon afterwards "No side" was called.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 3 tries (9 points)

TAYLORS 1 goal 1 try (8 points)

REMARKS.

It was a remarkable finish to a well-contested game. On the actual play the Taylors did not deserve to lose, and a draw would have been a more satisfactory ending. The Taylors played the more attractive football, backs and forwards handling well, whilst close dribbling was a great feature. Several of the City forwards had played for the A team in the morning, and bearing this in mind the eight did well in holding up so successfully against the powerful opposition.

Bayliss had charge of the pack, and the County forward played a dashing game, with Coulson, Rea, Carter and Merry able supporters. Collins and Hughes combined effectively at half-back, and there was an improvement at three-quarter. James tackled well at full back, and Melliush on the other side was also a safe custodian.

GLOUCESTER A v. WEST END.

RESERVES WIN WITH WEAK TEAM.

A fair crowd attended at Castle Meadow this morning to see West End engage Gloucester A. The Reserves had a difficulty in getting a team together, and in addition to playing several substitutes were a man short. The ground was slippery and the ball greasy, making accurate play almost impossible.

The opening stages were vigorously contested, with little in it for either side. The Seconds' three-quarters carried out two or three promising movements, Crowther and Loveridge running well. West End were keen tacklers, and managed to spoil the rushes. The home team also had the advantage in the scrums, where Gloucester A were handicapped with seven men. West End generally managed to get the ball away from the scrum, and L. Meadows and G. Cole did quite well, but there was lack of combination amongst the three-quarters. Eventually the visiting backs handled beautifully, and Gibbs rushed up the touch-line, avoiding pursuers, and scored a try, which Williams found too difficult to convert. Following this reverse West End forwards rushed to the visitors' quarter, but the defence held.

HALF-TIME :

Gloucester A	1 try
West End	Nil

The second half opened with a determined rush to the Gloucester A line, and West End made every effort to open their account. They could not quite force the attack home, however, and Jack Webb, with a champion dash, carried play to mid-field again. Then the visiting forwards rushed, and A. Mann went over in the melée, Williams placing a good goal.

For a time even play ruled with few incidents, and then Crowther broke away, and seemed to have got clear, but Ford, who had been doing splendidly in defence, took him by the leg and prevented what looked like a certain score. West End had to defend, but Cole punted clear, and Williams being well tackled by Hawker, the home team were again in their opponents' quarter. The attack was short-lived, for Loveridge ran the ball out, and sent to touch well down. The home forwards put in a couple of rushes, but the defence was sure, Williams fielding, tackling, and kicking splendidly.

Crowther dribbled to the West End 25 but he failed to pass Weaver, who effected a useful save and kick to touch. Hanks put in a dash up the line after fielding a punt by Loveridge but Loveridge got across and tackled him.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ... 1 goal 1 try (8 pts.)

West End Nil

REMARKS.

Considering that Glo'ster A had such a weak team they did well to win. It was in the back division that they outclassed the home team, who although playing a keen, dashing game, were lacking in the finer points and failed in combination.

L. Meadows played a useful game for them as scrum half and Ford is a good bustling three-quarter. Albert Wright and A. Meadows played well for them in the front rank. Williams played a fine game for the Seconds at full back, and Loveridge, Crowther and Gibbs were prominent, with Webb, Curtis and Mansell working hard amongst the forwards.