

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1924.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER'S THIRD DEFEAT AT KINGSHOLM.

UNPLEASANT AND UNSATISFACTORY GAME.

CROSS KEYS INTERNATIONAL SENT OFF.

In seven previous matches with Cross Keys, Gloucester had lost six and drawn one – a record which it was hoped the City would break to-day at Kingsholm in the return fixture with the Monmouth Valley Club.

At Cross Keys, in January, Gloucester were very unlucky in being defeated by 8 points to 6, a penalty goal to the Welshmen deciding the issue near the end of the game.

The weather was fine but cold and the ground in splendid condition.

The attendance was disappointing at the start, only about 4,000 being present.

Winmill was absent from the visitors' ranks, but otherwise both clubs fielded full strength.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : R. James.

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

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

FORWARDS : A. Hall, T. Voyce, S. Bayliss, F. Ayliffe, T. Coulson, J. Merry, H. Collier, P. Carter.

## CROSS KEYS.

BACK : R. Lyons.

THREE-QUARTERS : T. Benson (capt.), O. Hicks, W. Burnett, and D. Williams.

HALF-BACKS : F. Reeves and H. Rowe.

FORWARDS : S. Morris, W. Millard, W. James, W. Hicks, A. H. Evans, A. Blakemore, C. Phillips, and R. Herrera.

Referee : Mr. R. Fear (Somerset)

## THE GAME.

The toss favoured Gloucester, and Morris kicked off, but the ball not going ten yards, a scrum followed at the centre. Cross Keys were early penalised, and with a long punt Millington found touch inside the visitors' 25, the ball bouncing over Lyon's head. Gloucester started an attack on the left from a long line out, but Millington was smothered.

From some loose play the Welshmen kicked ahead, and fumbling by the home backs allowed them to make further headway. A beautifully judged kick to touch placed the visitors close to the home line, where several scrummages took place. From one of these the Cross Keys forwards rushed over the mark, and MORRIS was credited with a try. Burnett failed at goal.

The opening score came in less than five minutes and after a very tame start. Gloucester restarted and from a scrum Collins and Hughes opened out, but the movement broke down. Millington, however, recovered and sent to touch. Clever kicking by Burnett changed the venue, but the City forwards swept back with a dashing burst, which Williams checked.

The visiting pack retaliated, and later a penalty was given against Gloucester for an off-side tackle. Brown replied well to the kick, and Gloucester again obtained a good attacking position. The City backs failed in an attempt at passing, but the home team kept up the pressure.

A clever move by the City halves led to Hughes making a sweet opening, and passing at the right moment to BAYLISS, the latter scored ten yards from the posts. Millington missed the goal points.

The game was fast on the resumption, and the tackling very keen and deadly. For a time Gloucester had the better of the exchanges, but there was little in it. With a loose dribble the Welshmen got past the centre, where a wild pass from Williams lost a possible opening. Gloucester were gradually force back to their line, and once matters looked dangerous for the City. A penalty, however, saved the situation.

Gloucester made a sad mess of some passing, and again allowed the visitors to gain a footing in their quarter. The forwards rushed out of danger, but Reeves, Rose and Williams with neat combination forced an attack, which was stopped by Hughes and James throwing the wing man to touch.

So far the backs on either side had not shown much skill, and for the most part it had been a struggle between the forwards. The visitors were the stronger in the scrums and got the ball oftener, but when Gloucester did get possession the backs generally muddled things up. Altogether the football from a spectacular standpoint was very moderate to say the least.

A capital move by Collins and Hughes sent Millington away, but a forward pass was ruled. Immediately after Ayliffe picked up in the loose, and after a short burst passed to Hall, who yielded to Voyce. The latter was upset ten yards outside, but Gloucester struggled hard for a score. There was rough and tumble in front of the posts, and the referee had occasion to speak to a visiting forward.

The City worked desperately in subsequent play, and Miller essayed a drop at goal, but the ball went wide. Just previously Hughes was damaged in some heavy exchanges and had to be carried off. Millington played outside half and Voyce went centre.

Fielding a kick down the field Miller was tackled and robbed of possession, a visitor punting to well inside the home half. A strong forward rush seriously tested the home defence, but Meadows managed to save. A series of passes later got the ball out to the backs, but Burnett was only able to punt straight to touch. Soon after there was a delay owing to a Cross Keys player being injured, but he was able to continue.

From the ensuing scrum the visitors' backs handled, the ball coming right across the ground to Williams, who sent to touch. Play operated in the Gloucester half until a penalty gave the City relief.

Hughes now returned, and Voyce was immediately prominent by tackling a couple of opponents in succession. The International later got in a fine touchfinder which staved off a threatened attack, and at the interval play was at the centre.

HALF-TIME SCORE :  
GLOUCESTER ..... 1 try  
CROSS KEYS ..... 1 try

The game in the first half had lacked real incident, and the football shown had not been of a standard to excite much enthusiasm. The visiting forwards had played a bustling game, and were more dangerous than the home eight.

Hughes did not come out when the game was resumed, and Voyce still played at centre. Cross Keys gained an advantage from the start, and the City were hotly pressed. Millington missing a pass from Collins on the line, the visitors were nearly over. A desperate forward effort relieved, but Hicks made a clever mark and had a shot for goal. His kick, however, was wide, and only a minor resulted.

Gloucester dropped out, and at once made an incursion into their opponents' end. They were driven back by the visiting forwards, who were stopped by Millington. The City captain was kicked whilst on the ground, and there was a general upset. The result was that Steve Morris was sent off. From this point the players got out of hand, and the proceedings became very rough.

Cross Keys gained the upper hand, thanks to their forwards, and in a dangerous rush the ball was carried over and MILLARD credited with a try. Benson failed at goal.

Gloucester restarted and prevented a return, but the position was quickly lost, and fumbling nearly gave away another try. Voyce had now gone back in the pack, and Carter came out to three-quarter. The play, however, continued to favour Cross Keys, whose bustling forwards proved too strong for the home set.

James getting a kick charged down, the ball rebounded over the line, and EVANS gained the touch for a try. the goal-kick was disallowed.

The game on the restart was a rough and tumble, and football was at a discount. Gloucester had one good chance when Meadows broke away, but the centre sent an impossible pass to Miller.

The City players could not seem to do the right thing for a time, but at length Collins and Millington inter-passed cleverly, and only just failed to pierce the defence. Gloucester now made strenuous efforts to cross, and from a charged down kick Coulson tried to force himself over, but was held up and thrown back into the field of play.

Immediately after Cross Keys were penalised for off-side in front of the posts, and with a neat kick MILLINGTON landed a goal. Encouraged by this score Gloucester played up strongly, and Ayliffe broke away with the ball at his feet. He was well supported, and the combined effort took the ball right to the line, where the visitors saved by touching down – a narrow escape.

Gloucester had the better of the exchanges on the drop-out, but a long kick by Burnett found touch in the Gloucester 25. From a long throw-out, the Welsh backs handled, but Brown got across and effected a smothering tackle of Williams. Cross Keys attacked strongly in subsequent play, and the City defence was hotly assailed. To the finish play favoured the Welshmen, but there was no further scoring.

RESULT :

CROSS KEYS ..... 3 tries (9 points)

GLOUCESTER ... 1 goal (p) 1 try (6 points)

REMARKS.

One of the most unpleasant and unsatisfactory games it has been my lot to witness for many a long day. Of real football there was precious little, and at times the rival teams so completely lost their heads that there was more scrapping than anything else.

For alleged kicking of Millington on the ground, Steve Morris, the Welsh International forward, was sent off the field, but there were other "incidents" in which players on both sides were concerned, which left a very bad impression. Why so much feeling was introduced I cannot understand; but after this afternoon's exhibition it would be just as well if the teams were kept apart for a while. Such displays certainly are no good to the game, and judged by the adverse comments one heard on leaving the ground the receipts at Kingsholm are almost bound to suffer.

Gloucester's form to-day was a keen disappointment. Cross Keys were strong enough in all departments to have won well by playing proper football, but the visitors resorted to very questionable tactics. The trouble began early in the first half when Gloucester were on the attack, and later developed into a regular rough and tumble.

The Gloucester forwards, upset by the bustling tactics of their powerful opponents, were never able to produce their proper form. Occasionally, the players flattered with a dashing combined effort, but there was an absence of finish. Both in the scrums and lines-out the Welshmen proved superior, and the visitors' work in the loose, too, was more vigorous and effective. Coulson, Bayliss, Ayliffe, and Voyce were perhaps the more noticeable, but the pack as a whole had to acknowledge the superiority of their opponents.

Behind, the City fared worse. Collins and Hughes (up to the time of the latter's injury) and Millington (when he was at outside half) accomplished some good things, and Sid Brown tackled splendidly, twice getting across and saving certain scores, but as a combination the set was very poor.

Meadows spoiled some promising work by bad finishing, and Miller played the worse game I have seen him for the premiers. James was fair – he was seen at his best in fielding – but he gave away one try, and his work close in was not impressive.

Cross Keys are not such a clever all-round side as formerly, but they were too good for Gloucester this afternoon. The forwards were always dangerous, and Reeves and Howe had a good understanding at half.

The three-quarters now and again passed neatly, but the players were more effective with their kicking, in which Burnett and Hicks, at centre, were extremely clever.

As previously remarked, the Welshmen were good enough to win on their merits, and the introduction of so much questionable play was greatly to be regretted.

Next week : Bristol, at Kingsholm.