

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1924.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER OPEN NEW YEAR WITH A WIN.

OLD BLUES BEATEN BY FIVE POINTS.

VISITORS' ATTRACTIVE DISPLAY.

Gloucester had the Old Blues (Christ's Hospital Old Boys) for opponents at Kingsholm this afternoon, the whole proceeds of the match being donated to the funds of the Royal Infirmary. The Gloucester Club bore the whole expenses of the match, including the guarantee to the visiting team.

The Old Blues figured on the Gloucester card for the first time last season, when they suffered a heavy defeat by 39 points to 8, the City team proving too clever all-round for the Londoners. Gloucester, however, have not been doing very well of late, and though the side fielded to-day was much stronger than in recent matches, another such runaway victory was not expected. Voyce, engaged in the English trial, and James (full back) were absent from the City team, and the latter's inability to turn out afforded an opportunity to give a trial to S. Williams, who has been doing well for the Seconds.

The afternoon was dull, and the attendance at the start was rather below the average for the First team matches.

The visitors made one change from the advertised team; G. Poskitt taking the place of Middleditch, forward. Franklin was at full back, and the left wing three-quarter position was filled by A. A. Jones (son of ex-Supt. F. Jones, formerly of Gloucester).

The teams took the field punctually to time as follow :

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : S. Williams.

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

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

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

OLD BLUES.

BACK : H. W. F. Franklin.

THREE-QUARTERS : A. A. Jones, W. H. Mills, G. K. Cooper, and A. C. Bennett.

HALF-BACKS : G. H. H. Collins, C. D. Wales, and S. H. Wales.

FORWARDS : G. T. E. Cockerill (captain), G. Poskitt, C. J. W. Hodgson, R. C. Hare, P. Mayne, E. G. Moore, and J. N. Young.

Referee : Mr. George Romans.

THE GAME.

The toss favoured Gloucester, and the Old Blues kicked off, but the ball going straight to touch a scrum followed at the centre. The City forwards heeled, but Millington failed to take from Hughes, though he recovered and got in a punt to touch.

Some exchange kicked ensued, ending in the Old Blues reaching the home half. In some loose play the visitors handled, but a dropped transfer spoiled a good opening. A moment later, however, C. WALES picked up and with a clever left-foot drop landed a lovely goal, giving first points to the Londoners. The success was very heartily cheered.

Gloucester re-started, and there being no reply the City gained a good position. There was an attempt at passing, but the movement broke down with a bad pass from Meadows to Brown.

A strong forward burst brought Gloucester well down, and Hall gathering executed a strong dash and pass to AYLIFFE, who crossed in a good position for Millington to convert, giving Gloucester the lead.

On the resumption the City forwards had the better of the frontal exchanges. Heeling nicely, Collins secured and fed Hughes, who cut out a lovely opening. He reached Franklin and then sent to BROWN, who sprinted over with a good try far out. Millington failed at goal.

Play on the re-start was fast and open, the visitors showing clever play in the open. Mayne had a shot for goal from a penalty, but it was a poor attempt. The Old Blues, however, set up a warm attack, the backs passing neatly and gaining a lot of ground. Gloucester were pressed back, and from a throw-out the visitors secured and after a couple of exchanges HODGSON raced over neatly amidst applause. Mayne kicked a fine goal, and the Londoners were a point up.

Gloucester showed up strongly on the re-start, but fast following up by the visitors changed the venue, and play centred in the home half. The City forwards had none the better of the scrums, and sharp breaking up and loose dribbles severely tested the City defence.

From a smart effort by S. Wales, Jones beat several defenders cleverly, but was eventually brought down. Then in quick succession Mayne and S. Wales forced minors with attempts to drop goals.

The football was fast and interesting, with the Old Blues playing an open game and handling very smartly. From a cross-kick S. Wales burst through the home defence neatly and started passing. The ball was taken and given cleverly, but with Mills going strongly for a score he was finely upset by Hughes.

Gloucester cleared from a dangerous position with useful kicks, but the Old Blues soon returned to the attack, Williams being twice tested, but his kicks were of no great length, and play was confined to the home half.

The visiting forwards beat the home men in the lines-out, and once broke away beautifully for 30 yards. The Gloucester tackling was very weak at times, and this defect allowed the Londoners to maintain their advantage.

By loose rushing and clever runs by Hughes the Old Blues were pressed in their 25. The ball coming out Collins served Hughes, and Sid Brown was given a chance on the right wing, but he was upset outside.

The City continued on the attack, but C. Wales intercepting a pass raced to the centre and punted. Daniell got back and put in a fine cross-kick after a short run. Franklin was immediately pulled down, and the Gloucester forwards dribbled away. Eventually the ball was picked up, and after several exchanges COLLIER went over near the posts with a try. Millington missed the easy place. This was a remarkable score, play having travelled from one end of the field to the other.

There was no falling away in keenness, dash and vigour on resuming. The Old Blues continued to make the game delightfully open, and all-round they were smarter and faster than the home backs. The Gloucester forwards shone in a good rush, but S. Wales saved, and later brought good relief. Millington did similarly for Gloucester in subsequent play, and play was at the centre at the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER 1 goal, 2 tries
OLD BLUES 2 goals (1d)

The Old Blues had served up an excellent game in the first half, and had had more of the game than the City. Ayliffe restarted for Gloucester, and after a spell of exchanges between the forwards, a penalty enabled the Old Blues to pass the centre.

Jones further improved the position with a useful punt to touch. The visitors showed adaptability in opening up from the loose, and several times the ball was got away to the surprise of the home men.

Some handling by the visitors going astray, Gloucester were able to make headway. Hughes gathering from the ground, tricked an opponent cleverly and passed to Meadows, who fed Millington. The latter, however, pressed Brown too near touch for the wing man to do anything.

A big dash by Hall and some close forward work carried play to the Old Blues' line, where some strenuous tackling was seen on both sides. The Londoners worked out with useful footwork, but the City replied, and a desperate burst, with Collier, Carter, and Coulson in the van, just failed in a try, S. Wales touching down in the nick of time.

In the next few minutes the Gloucester three-quarters had several chances of showing their skill, but generally it was a case of failure – faulty transfers or holding on too long. Gloucester, however, pegged away, and Hughes shone in a brilliant run, clearing his opponents in wonderful style until "legged" by Franklin. He then let the ball go, and the forwards dribbled on and over the line. In a race for the touch SID BROWN won and notched a try, which Millington failed to convert. This gave the City a five points lead.

Following the resumption the Old Blues, who were always dangerous when in possession, passed neatly, the ball coming out to Bennett on the left wing. Collier, however, marked his man and brought off a splendid tackle.

A promising movement by the Gloucester backs petered out with a punt ahead by Meadows, the ball going to touch. Franklin twice checked the home forwards in dangerous loose rushes and kicked well to touch. Later the Oxonian marked from a cross-punt by Daniell, and found touch with a splendid return.

The football in this half had not been so attractive, the marking being too keen. Play on the whole was fairly even, both sides in turn gaining the advantage. A pretty move by Millington, who punted ahead and followed up, was just spoiled by Franklin and S. Wales, the visitors gaining an advantage with useful kicks. The game continued to hover round about midfield.

Then came one of the best bits of combination on the part of the home backs. Collins, Hughes, Millington and Brown in turn handled, the two latter repassing nicely, but the final transfer was ruled forward. Hughes next came into prominence with a feint and dash past several opponents, but succumbed to numbers.

The Old Blues, playing with plenty of dash, and kicking well, held their own. Williams was twice called upon, but the Second teamer was safe and got in good returns. The Londoners, however, came back, and C. Wales just failed with a drop for goal.

From the City's own 25 Meadows broke away and fed Daniell, who made a spirited dash, but fell to a good tackle by Franklin. Play to the end was full of interest, but there was no further scoring.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 1 goal 3 tries (14 pts.)
OLD BLUES2 goals (1d) (9 points)

REMARKS.

One of the most attractive and open games seen at Kingsholm for some time. By scoring four tries to one Gloucester were value for the victory, but if points were awarded for the best display of football, the Old Blues would certainly get my vote. Playing the eight-backs formation, the Londoners gave a particularly bright exhibition; they opened out the game at every opportunity, and showed pace, skill, combination and accuracy in handling far in advance of the home backs. That they failed to score on several occasions was due to bad luck.

Gloucester, with a more representative side out to-day, were seen to better advantage; yet one could not say the team gave satisfaction. The forwards only had seven men against them, but the visitors were by no means overpowered; in fact, they frequently challenged the home men for supremacy in the scrums, lines-out, and loose. The play throughout was very fast, and with scoring points coming to both sides within ten minutes of the kick-off, interest was aroused at the outset.

The Gloucester front were conspicuous with some strong rushes, and at times they bullocked their way through the opposition, but in the finer points of the game the Old Blues were always the more polished. Time and again the visitors opened up from the loose, and one had evidence of the advantage of the modern style as practised by the Universities and Public Schools.

The visitors had some pace forward this afternoon, and they tackled with deadly earnestness. The City players, too, marked effectively, though at times the mistake was made of going too high for opponents. Hall did find work in stopping and in the long lines-out, but for general all-round play Collier, Merry, Coulson and Carter came prominently under notice. Cockerill led the visiting pack well, and he was splendidly supported by Hodgson and Mayne.

The Old Blues were clever and resourceful behind the scrummage, and on the day were a better balanced set than the City. The rival Collins' had a rare duel at scrum half, with little to choose between them. Hughes had two smart players opposed to him in the Brothers Wales, yet the Gloucester man succeeded in doing a lot of brilliant solo work in attack, and was one of the best in defence on his side.

Immediate support, however, was not satisfactory, Millington and Meadows making several bad mistakes in handling when movements promised to bring something tangible. The Captain once or twice effected capital clearances under pressure, but he is not the player of old just now by a long way. Daniell was back at right wing this afternoon, but did not get a great deal to do, and Sid Brown was not overburdened, though he contrived to register a couple of tries.

The Old Blues' centres combined well with the Brothers Wales, and all displayed commendable enterprise in attempting to break through. It was pleasing to see the players only resort to kicking when no other useful purpose could be served; aimless punting in the open is often overdone. On the respective wings, both Jones and Bennett displayed rare dash. The former, who usually plays full back, has a good style, and he cuts inside an opponent very neatly.

At full-back, Franklin was watched with great interest. He opened none too well, but later he played a capital game, kicking with splendid length and judgment, and clearing from forward rushes in approved style.

On the whole display, however, he was not in International form. Williams, on his first appearance for the Seniors, performed creditably. He was inclined to run too far with the ball, and this was risky against fast forwards. His kicking for the most part was good, and he made few mistakes in fielding.

Next week : Cross Keys, away.

GLOUCESTER A v. OIL MILLS.

CITY SECONDS' GOOD WIN.

At Hempsted. The Oil Mills kicked off, and after some 15 minutes' forward play a good burst by Hogg, who beat several opponents, saw a final transfer to Pool, who scored an unconverted try.

From a scrum in the Mills' quarter the ball came out to Stone, who dropped a lovely goal. Pool added the next try after a fine burst by Hogg, who cross-kicked.

HALF-TIME :

Gloucester A 1 goal (d), 2 tries
Oil Mills Nil

In the second half, after a splendid forward dribble by the Gloucester pack, Fisher picked up and scored a try, which he also converted.

Mansell was the next to score a try, which Pool converted, and shortly afterwards Hogg secured from a scrum and, after a very tricky run, added another unconverted try under the posts.

G. Manns was knocked out and carried off early in the second half.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ... 3 goals (1d), 3 tries (23 pts,)
Oil Mills Nil