

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1922.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. CHELTENHAM.

TOWN BEATEN BY TEN POINTS.

WELL DONE, RESERVES !

Owing to the call of the County, Gloucester were able to field little better than a reserve team for their match with Cheltenham at Kingsholm this afternoon.

The attendance was fair, and the weather conditions good except for a slight mist. A fair contingent of Cheltenham people came over for the match.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : R. James.

THREE-QUARTERS: S. R. Crowther, J. C. Collett, F. Meadows, and J. W. Gibbs.

HALF-BACKS: E. Hughes and R. Cook.

FORWARDS: S. Smart (captain), M. Evans, S. Bayliss, T. Coulson, H. W. Collier, A. Rea, F. Mansell, and A. Wright.

CHELTENHAM.

BACK: Watson.

THREE-QUARTERS: Loveluck, Hart, Statham, and E. A. Moore.

HALF-BACKS: Bloodworth and Fitz.

FORWARDS: Wixey, Stephens, Burford, Jackson, Cocks, Triggs-Herbert, Rees, and Febrey.

THE GAME.

Bloodworth kicked off, and there was no return. From the first scrum Fitz got the ball away and the visiting threes handled, Hart being held up. James made a mark and sent to touch, and from a line-out Collett got the ball and kicked down to Watson, who misfielded, but Loveluck got in a loose kick and checked an ugly rush. Play was again at midfield, where Hughes got the ball out from the scrum and put in a useful kick to touch.

Fitz got away and fed his backs, the ball travelling across to Loveluck, who was nicely tackled by Crowther. It was turn and turn about at the scrum, but the Gloucester backs did not handle so well as the visitors. Bayliss led a fine dash to the Cheltenham quarter, but was pulled up. Then Collett fielded a punt when in his stride and forced his way through a heap of opponents, but was tackled just in time, and Cheltenham cleared from the next scrum.

The City continued their pressure, and another forward movement carried play to the corner. Cheltenham were putting up a good defence and managed to keep Gloucester out. Shortly after the home team opened their account as the result of a splendid combined movement, the forwards heeling, the halves getting the ball smartly away to Meadows, who fed Collett for the inside right to give the "dummy" nicely to Moore and pass to Gibbs, who went over with a strong dash. James converted.

On the restart, Cheltenham, aided by a splendid kick by Bloodworth, worked to the home quarter where Fitz obtained and sent to Hart who, however, dropped the ball, and allowed Collett to kick down to Watson. The home custodian fumbled; but Moore saved in time. Gloucester were penalised for not putting the ball in straight and Moore sent nicely to touch. Collett broke away with the ball at his feet; but Watson took the oval on the bounce and saved well.

Wixey took the ball from a line out and kicked to James who returned with interest and a keen scramble took place at midfield. This gave place to a rush by Meadows and Cook who dribbled to Watson, the latter being tackled on his own goal line. Cheltenham cleared, but Gloucester came again, and were penalised on account of Hughes picking the ball out of the scrum. Statham indiscreetly kicked into the middle of the field and Crowther sent to touch in the corner.

Wixey got away, but was quickly pulled up, and from a scrum the home backs handled after a sharp bit of work by Hughes, and Gibbs only missed a score by slipping on the wrong side of the line. Cheltenham were now penalised, and James kicked over the line, Statham kicking to touch a few yards out instead of touching down.

Cheltenham were now hard pressed, and Fitz had to resort to kicking when the forwards gave him the ball. A splendid clearance was effected by Statham, and Wixey improved matters with a dash to the centre. He followed this with a further rush, and with the aid of Statham carried play to the Gloucester 25.

Here Fitz got the ball away sharply to Bloodworth, who fed Loveluck, but the wing man was too well marked to get through. From the line-out Wixey obtained and burst over with a try near the posts, Bloodworth making a shocking attempt to add the extra points.

The City now woke up, and Collett and Gibbs rushed down the line and were not pulled up until they reached the visitors' quarter. The Cheltenham forwards came away again, and James was called upon to defend. He ran up the field and gave to Crowther, who was too well marked to do anything but kick to touch. The City continued to press and the three-quarters again handled, only for Meadows to pass too far back for Crowther to accept.

A nasty crack on the head caused Mansell to leave the field. Gloucester continued to press, and after Meadows had smartly retrieved a pass Crowther made a dash for the line, but he had three men to beat and fell to Watson.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER 1 goal
CHELTENHAM 1 try

Matters had been pretty even in a keen game, but it had been evident that if the Gloucester backs could have got a bit more of the ball they would have done better. The Cheltenham forwards were, however, doing very well both in the scrums and in the loose.

Mansell was still absent on the resumption, but came out shortly afterwards. Cheltenham heeled from the second scrum, and indulged in passing, but they fumbled, and Cook kicked to touch. From the line out Stephens led a rush, but he knocked on, and the movement was spoiled. Then Hughes got the ball away, and the three-quarters operated, Collett sending out a wide pass to Crowther, who punted ahead. Watson checked.

Cheltenham worked down to the City quarter, and then Hughes, Cook, and Meadows executed a sharp movement, which took Gloucester well down. Smart broke right through the scrum with the ball, and a keen struggle took place on the Cheltenham line. Hughes again set Collett on the move, but Collett held on a little too long, with Crowther waiting; and Moore ran away, but knocked on.

Off-side by Fitz saw Collett take a place-kick for goal. His kick went wide, and Statham replied with a splendid kick to touch at midfield. Hughes ran round the scrum, but passed wildly to Crowther. Collett found touch with a flying kick; and then Gloucester, from a scrum, had a fine chance, but Cook held on, and was pulled down when his three-quarters had almost a clear run.

Gloucester continued to worry the visitors who were hard put to it to keep them out, Collett and Gibbs making repeated dashes for the line. A Cheltenham passing movement saw Loveluck pulled down just as he was about to kick and Crowther picking up ran for the line and punted over Watson's head, but one of the Cheltenham men won the race for the touch.

Hart, who picked up in the open, made a spectacular run and passed several opponents, but he was pulled down when he appeared to have got well away. The City returned to the attack, and Gibbs ran down the line. He failed to get clear.

A further score was not long delayed, the home backs putting in a splendid combined movement in which Hughes, Cook, and Crowther handled, the wing man punting over the heads of Moor and Watson and gaining the touch. James failed to majorise from a somewhat difficult position.

Cheltenham now had a turn of attacking by loose ground work, but they did not keep it up very long and after James had kicked down to Watson play was again in the visitors' quarters. Gibbs had several strong attempts to get over, but Moore was marking him very keenly. Cheltenham lost Jackson injured.

In the closing stages Cheltenham were defending desperately, Stephens and Statham doing a lot of excellent work. Crowther got over from a scrum, but was recalled, and then Gloucester were penalised, and Cheltenham gained a breathing space. Wixey tried to improve matters, but only gained a few yards. Wright made a mark, and nearly kicked a goal.

Before the end Cheltenham brightened up. Statham made a fine run to the Gloucester quarter, Moore dribbling on and forcing Gloucester to concede a minor.

There was a short stoppage, and on the restart Gloucester executed a loose rush to the Cheltenham line, where Smart picked up and raced round behind the posts with a try, which James easily converted.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER2 goals 1 try (13 pts.)

CHELTENHAM 1 try (3 pts.)

REMARKS.

Gloucester won quite comfortably. On the run of the game they should have secured a much larger margin. The visiting forwards did fairly well in the scrums in the first half, and the whole side put up a good fight; but it was evident that they were outclassed in the back division.

Before the end Cheltenham fell away badly, and although they continued to defend desperately, their line was in peril time after time. In the loose Gloucester were greatly superior, although Wixey and Stephens made heroic efforts to stave off defeat.

Fitz and Bloodworth were only moderate at half, and were easily outplayed by Hughes and Cook. There can be no doubt that Hughes is the best reserve Gloucester has for the scrum-half position.

On paper it looked as though the home three-quarter line would lack combination; but they played together wonderfully well, there being little to choose between them. Collett was, perhaps, the most vigorous, but Crowther and Gibbs, on the wings, did remarkably well, and Meadows put in some excellent work.

James was safe all the time at full back, which was more than could be said for Watson, who often kicked into mid-field when his game was to find touch. The home forwards worked together most successfully.

J.H.H.