

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1922.

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER WIN ON TIME.

EXCITING FINISH TO SERVICES MATCH AT KINGSHOLM.

KEEN, SPORTING GAME, BUT FINISH LACKING.

Another naval side – on this occasion the Services from Devonport – were at Kingsholm to-day, and with several good performances to their credit the visitors were fully expected to give Gloucester a very close game. The City were again without Millington, and a further weakening of the ranks was caused by the absence of Voyce, Brown, and Hall.

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : J. C. Collett.

THREE-QUARTERS : N. Daniell, E. Hughes, S. Stone, and S. R. Crowther.

HALF-BACKS : T. Gough and F. Meadows.

FORWARDS : F. Ayliffe (captain), Major Roderick, G. Holford, S. Bayliss, H. W. Collier, M. Evans, S. Smart, and J. Harris.

DEVONPORT SERVICES.

BACK : F. G. Gilbert.

THREE-QUARTERS : Pte. Summerhayes, Lt. Simson, Capt. Dobbie, and Lt. E. R. H. Jones.

HALF-BACKS : J. Husson and Sub.-Lt. Rowlands.

FORWARDS : Lt. Eyres, E. R. Gardner, W. G. Luddington, Sub.-Lt. Wackett, Lt. Maxwell, Lt. Spencer, S. Stabb, and Lt. Kerr.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol).

THE GAME.

(By J.H.H.)

The weather was excellent, and there was a fair attendance when Ayliffe kicked off. There was no return, and from the ensuing line-out Gough made a mark. Very little ground was gained, and Gardner led a very pretty dribble to mid-field. Here Gough got the ball away to Meadows, but the latter was hampered and his pass went astray.

Hughes got to the ball and passed back to Collett, but the Gloucester back was unable to pick up cleanly, and with a bunch of Services forwards upon him things looked dangerous. Hughes got back and held up the attack, and after a line-out Meadows secured and sent to touch, thus securing a good position for Gloucester.

The City made an attack on the Services line, but the defence held. From a scrum Gough set his backs in motion, and Hughes ran well, but his pass to Daniell was forward. Lively play by the home three-quarters kept the visitors working hard, and then Crowther got off-side and play was again at mid-field.

Another pretty movement in which Hughes and Stone shone carried play into the services quarter again, but Rowlands and Maxwell came away with a fine dribble. Maxwell kicked forward, but Evans got back and made a mark. Devonport had, however, penetrated well into the home territory, and Gloucester being penalised for a scrum infringement Dobbie tried a shot for goal. It was a good effort, but just missed.

A strenuous struggle inside the home half saw Gilbert and Rowlands put in good touch-finders. Gloucester quickly cleared, but the Services came again, and Collett slipping when he went to field a kick almost let Stabb in, but the home back had knocked on and the City line was saved. The tables had now been turned, and it was Gloucester's turn to defend. This they did with vigour, and it was not long before they worked clear.

Meadows put in a champion run after cutting through. Collett slipped again and missed the ball, but he recovered and saved. Then Holford marked, and put in a kick to touch in the corner. Devonport cleared easily, but Gloucester were again properly on the move, and an exciting movement in which Stone, Daniell, and Holford indulged in inter-passing narrowly missed a score.

Collett, called upon, made no mistake and put in a powerful kick to touch. Still the City could not penetrate the visitors' defence, the excellent use of the touch-line made by Gilbert and the Devon centres helping them very greatly.

For obstruction just inside their own half the City were penalised, and Maxwell put in another fine kick for goal, which fell a yard short. Collett fielded, and running round sent the Services back to mid-field with a wonderful kick to touch.

Another attack by the visitors was similarly repulsed by the home back. Then Dobbie intercepted a pass and made for the home line at full speed. He passed to Husson when faced by Collett, but Daniell got across and spoiled the movement.

Another determined attack was made by Summerhayes, who put in a spectacular dash up the line and was only stopped with difficulty. Collier improved matters and put in a lengthy kick over Gilbert's head. The visiting back, however, got back and put in a tricky run.

Again Collett was cheered for a fine save and lengthy kick, and then Stone showed up with a useful defensive movement. Just before half-time a sharp attack by Gloucester led to Daniell and Gilbert indulging in an exchange of kicks. The home wing punted inside, and Collier dashing up fielded nicely and fell over with a try, Collett just failing to add the extra points.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
GLOUCESTER 1 try
DEVONPORT SERVICES Nil

Gloucester hardly deserved their lead at half-time, for the Services had had quite as much of the game as the home team.

The visiting backs handled well on the resumption, Ayliffe intercepting, and then Collett kicked down to Gilbert, who sent to touch in the corner. There was a struggle on the Gloucester lines, then Hughes ran out and sent to mid-field.

The Services continued to press for a time until Gough got the ball away and put his threes in motion. Crowther, however, missed his pass. The visiting pack were using their feet to great advantage, but Collett was not afraid to go down at the ball. One of the home backs failing to turn the ball to touch the ball went over the line and Collett only just managed to reach it in time to effect a save.

The visitors were playing up wonderfully well and testing the home team, but when things were none too bright Gough sent out a clean pass from the scrum, and after Meadows and Hughes had handled, Crowther made for the line. He punted over the heads of his opponents, but although Evans was well up he lacked pace to overtake Rowlands, who conceded a minor. Hard lines, Gloucester !

The City now had a turn of pressing, and Stone and Hughes put in some good work. They were met by a sturdy defence, and it was not long before a strong dribble put Collett again into action with good effect. Off-side by Meadows gave the visitors a chance to invade the home half. They were quickly cleared, Stone and Ayliffe figuring in the process.

The Services had a few anxious moments, Daniell, in the course of a determined attack making for the corner; but Gilbert effected a fine tackle. A moment later the Services cleared, and their three-quarters carried the game to the city quarter.

The home pack were heeling smartly, and Gough was giving the ball plenty of air, but the Services were playing a good defensive game, and it was rarely that the passing movements gained much ground.

Gloucester had slackened down considerably, and when the Services were in their quarter Eyres picked up and putting in a dodgy run left the Gloucester defence guessing and grounded in a position from which Stabb had no difficulty in landing a goal.

Two points down, Gloucester woke up and the three-quarters executed one of the prettiest movements of the afternoon, only for Gilbert to tip the ball out of Crowther's hands when he had a clear run in. Luck was out for Gloucester, for following this the ball travelled over to the other wing where Stone would have had little difficulty in getting through had he been able to hold the ball.

For the time being the City had lost their chance, the Services coming away with a rush to the home quarter. Hughes showed up with a smart individual run, but he held on a little too long. Twice again the City had chances which they failed to take advantage of, and then amidst great enthusiasm the backs handled and Crowther rounded the opposition and scored well in, Ayliffe taking the kick and adding the necessary points.

On their play in the last quarter of an hour Gloucester deserved their win.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 1 goal 1 try (8 points)

SERVICES 1 goal (5 points)

RUNNING COMMENTS

(By W.B.)

The appearance of the popular Devonport Services team at the City headquarters this afternoon recalled the visits of the famous combination of Rugby and Northern Union players which opposed Gloucester Scratch Fifteens during the war, and afforded displays equal to the best seen at Kingsholm.

Arthur Hudson, it will be remembered, then figured in the Services' ranks, and what a galaxy of talent he had with him behind the scrum ! A club side of that calibre to-day would take a lot of beating. But with the Armistice the license of the Rugby Union allowing the Service professional player to be associated with the amateur civilian in the playing field ceased, and the North Unionists (Seddon, Buck, Brittain, Willie Davies, Todd and other players) returned to their respective clubs.

The success of the Services organisation in the days referred to culminated in the promotion of the present club, and I understand two strong Fifteens are fielded each week, with headquarters at the old Devon Albion enclosure.

Gloucester had one fixture with the Devonport men last season – on Mop Monday – a remarkable game ending in favour of Gloucester by 6 goals (2p), 2 tries (32 points) to 1 try (3 points). This was one of the few matches in which Stanley Cook appeared for the City, and the old Cantab played a notable part in the success of the Kingsholm men. All the scoring was done in the second half, the attacks of the Gloucester backs being well-nigh irresistible. I did not anticipate anything like such free scoring this afternoon if the Services showed the form they displayed against Bristol, Northampton and other strong sides.

It was a wise policy on the part of Tom Millington to take a rest to-day. Damaged against the United Services, he received another nasty knock in the County match last week, from which he was still suffering. The vice-captain's absence gave Meadows a further opportunity of displaying his abilities at outside half, and I was anxious to see him in opposition to Lieut. Rowlands, the Devon County player, who is regarded as pretty hot stuff. The renewed duel between Gough and Husson at the scrum also had its attractions.

Where Gloucester were expected to be hard put this afternoon was forward, where the Services were reported to be exceptionally strong in scrummaging ability. The City pack, however, were good enough for the best if all put their backs into their work.

Roderick was missed against Oxford in the scrums; and weight and strength would be invaluable against the robust Naval men. Hall's defection, however, was a damper this morning, for the Cinderfordian has been in splendid form of late.

Sid Brown, who is suffering from an injured toe, was still unfit to turn out, and Crowther came in again at left wing. Brown has accepted his position in the Lancashire team v. Yorkshire next Saturday, and his Gloucester admirers will wish him the best of luck and success for the county of his birth.

Accompanying the Services were Commander E. W. Roberts, the old English and Devon forward, and a member of the English Selection Committee, and S. F. Cooper, another English International, who played against Wales in the one and only International played at Kingsholm. The visiting team looked a workmanlike lot on fielding in their Royal blue jerseys, white knickers and red stockings.

The opening stages were not very impressive, and both sides were early responsible for some bad mistakes in handling. The Gloucester forwards were doing very well in the scrums and heeling nicely, but the backs could not get going properly until a smart movement, in which Gough, Meadows, Hughes, Stone, and Daniell took part, made good headway. But Dobbie was too sharp on Daniell and quickly bowled him to touch. The veteran Gilbert, at full-back for the Services, did not give much away when the ball came to him, and his fielding and kicking were generally excellent.

Up to this point, however, the football had been of poor quality. There was scarcely a concerted movement of real merit, and the forward play was very scrambling. The Services' backs kicked with better judgment than the home players, and from one high punt Collett ran in to field, missed, and very nearly let his side down. For a few minutes after this Gloucester were outplayed, and had the Services' backs possessed any real penetrative power or finish, the City line could not have escaped.

Gloucester eventually put some spirit into their work, and from some open play at the centre the City secured a good opening. But a glorious chance of scoring was thrown away by some reckless passing right on the goal line. It was a bad miss; a little judgment would have made a try a certainty.

The City lost ground after this, bad tackling and failure to go down to loose rushes accounting for a good deal. When the City backs were started on a promising movement Stone lost the ball, and a visitor securing, made a dangerous run, Gloucester being very lucky in escaping. The game went on in this haphazard way until nearing the interval, when Gloucester obtained the lead as the result of a try by Collier.

I cannot say the home team deserved a three points lead on the play. The Services had done more of the attacking. But the visitors were not happy in combination. The idea of continually opening up the game was all right, but the visitors often seemed to pass for the sake of passing, and the handling was frequently erratic.

The Services again had the better of the exchanges on the resumption, but they did not look like a scoring side. The Gloucester backs were the first to distinguish themselves with a combined movement which was the best carried out so far. The ball went right across the ground to Crowther, who cross-punted over the line, but Rowlands beat Stone for the touch – a very near thing.

Gloucester during the next five minutes had their best period of the game to date. They pressed vigorously; Stone brought off a splendid dodgy run which might with a bit of luck have materialised, and Daniell just missed a corner try after a great effort to jump Gilbert in the corner.

Then a turn came for the Services, due to faulty play on the part of the City, and with a fine individual effort Eyres scored, and with the goal-kick successful the Services gained a two points' lead. Well, they had deserved a score, and the applause of the crowd showed it.

In less than a couple of minutes Gloucester had a great chance of going ahead again. A perfect bit of passing left the ball with Hughes, who ran right down to Gilbert, with Daniell in attendance. It looked odds on a score, but Hughes went up too close to Gilbert before parting, and the latter snapped up the pass and punted clear.

Then a missed penalty by Collett from a good position lost another chance of saving the game; whilst in the last five minutes two more opportunities of scoring were thrown away.

There was just time for Gloucester to pull the game out of the fire. Would the City succeed? The last scrum was formed inside the Services 25, and Gough got the ball away smartly after his forwards had heeled. Meadows, Stone, and Hughes in turn handled, and it only wanted Crowther to take the final transfer to make the try secure, for the defence was beaten. This time the left winger made no mistake, and once in possession Crowther darted over the line and scored amidst the frantic cheering of the spectators. The game was won despite the result of the kick at goal, but Captain Ayliffe successfully negotiated the shot, and Gloucester were winners by three points.

It was an exciting finish, but the game for more than three parts was of a very moderate standard, based on what one expects for first-class sides. It was far too scrappy for one thing, and though the Gloucester backs made some amends in the last quarter, there was a lot of poor play previously. The Services are a strong, sturdy lot forward, and to-day they were more than the City eight could manage, especially in the loose. In the scrums the rival packs had a fair share of the ball, but the heeling at times was none too good. Evans, Roderick, Ayliffe and Smart stood out prominently among the home men, and for the Services none worked harder than Gardner, Eyres, and Luddington.

At half-back, Gough more than held his own with Husson, but the City scrum worker still lacks the facility of getting his transfer in the right direction. Meadows played another useful game, though not so effective all round as against Oxford.

At three-quarter, the Gloucester men were at fault on a good many occasions, the handling especially being erratic. Hughes played clever and enterprising football, and Stone, too, made several good openings, but the Forester was not free from fault. Daniell made the best use of his opportunities, and Crowther also did a lot of useful work, culminating in scoring the winning try.

Collett was not up to recent form, though he made some splendid relief kicks and saved some desperate situations. The veteran Gilbert is really a marvel. His display for the Services was one of the features of the game, and he won frequent applause from the crowd for his wonderful clearances.

The visitors played bright open football, and on the play they were unlucky to lose. They have some good men behind the scrum, but the tendency this afternoon was to overdo the passing, the ball at times being thrown about very wildly. Dobbie and Jones were the pick at three-quarter, but all the players could kick well and were keen tacklers.

The sporting character of the game was greatly enjoyed by the spectators, and the Services team had an ovation on leaving the field.

Next week Gloucester are at Newport, and the City will have to show better form if that long record of defeats at Rodney Parade is to be broken.

GLOUCESTER A v. CHELTENHAM A.

CITY SECONDS' EASY WIN.

On the Athletic Ground. Gloucester kicked off, but thanks to a fine punt and follow up by Stephens, Cheltenham got down to the visitors' line, yet could not cross. The visiting forwards cleared, and the ball coming to Carter that player put in a clinking run and kicked over the full-back's head, for Washbourne to race up and score a try, which R. James failed to convert.

Hughes having made an unsuccessful attempt to drop a goal, the visitors came away, and from a passing movement in front of the Cheltenham citadel Wadley received and ran in, James goaling.

Snell badly mulled at full-back hereabouts, and left an open goal for half a dozen Gloucester men, who conceded the easy try to Cook, James adding the goal points.

Cheltenham now put some vim into their play, and a capital run by Ward enabled him to score, Hughes' place kick failing.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 2 goals, 1 try
Cheltenham 1 try

Early in the second half a kick into the open by Cheltenham landed the ball among the visiting backs, and Washbourne neatly sent Carter in with a try, and immediately afterwards Washbourne himself scored. James failed in both attempts for the extra points.

Gloucester continued to have much the better of the play, and Wadley easily ran through the home side and scored, the place kick again failing.

Following a punt by Fellows, Stephens dribbled over the line and scored in the last minute, Hughes adding the extra points.

Gloucester played one man short throughout.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 2 goals 4 tries (22 points)
Cheltenham A 1 goal 1 try (8 points)