

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1929

GLOUCESTER 3 Pts., CHELTENHAM 3 Pts.

CHELTENHAM UNLUCKY.

CITY TEAM SAVED BY THE FORWARDS.

GWYN DAVIES' BRILLIANT TRY.

SPECIAL BY "W.B."

Would Cheltenham follow Moseley's lead and break a long record of defeats at Kingsholm to-day? Form pointed to such a possibility. It was 23 years ago – the exact date was October 20th, 1906 – that Cheltenham recorded their one and only victory at the City headquarters with a team that challenged comparison with any that has represented the Town before or since.

Bert Davy was at full-back, in that memorable match, the three-quarters were C. Clifford, Lieut. A. Marsden, L. W. Hayward, and F. Fry; A. Goddard and G. T. Unwin were the half-backs, and the forwards were G. Cossens, H. Manley, C. S. Barnett, C. Bennett, W. N. Unwin, J. V. Bedell-Sivright, T. Clarke, and H. Quixley.

Gloucester had to field several reserves owing to players being injured, but the Fifteen was composed of G. Romans; A. Hudson, E. Hall, C. Smith, and L. Vears; J. Stephens and Albert Hall; H. Collins, G. Matthews, W. J. Pearce, D. Holland, F. Pegler, A. Hawker, R. James, and A. Purton – a combination that would be regarded as more than useful in these days. Cheltenham won this match by a try to nil, the scorer being Clifford.

SERIOUS CHALLENGERS.

Cheltenham's fine record this season – they are undefeated at home and had only lost to Penarth and Bridgend – entitled the team to be regarded as serious challengers to Gloucester, and a large number of followers accompanied the players in the hope of seeing the City colours lowered once more.

WEAKENED TEAMS.

It was unfortunate that circumstances prevented the clubs being tested at full strength. The schoolmaster players in either team – McCanlis and Crichton-Miller (Gloucester), and R. H. Juckes and H. B. L. Wake (Cheltenham) – were not available, and in addition Gloucester had to field short of Roy James, injured in the match with Oxford Greyhounds on Thursday. This necessitated a rearrangement of the home three-quarter line, Abbey and Orpin figuring at centre, and W. Pittman, of the A team, making his first appearance for the seniors on the wing. Pittman played for the Ex-Scholars last season, and is only 18 years of age. A needle match of this description was a big test for the youngster, but his form with the A team encouraged the hope that he would not let the side down.

The weather conditions were bad, a drizzling rain, which had threatened all the morning, falling, and a mist gathering. Prospects of a record gate for the season were thus spoiled, though under the circumstances the gate was a fair one.

Teams :

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : H. Boughton.

THREE-QUARTERS : R. N. Loveridge, G. Orpin, L. Abbey, and W. Pittman.

HALF-BACKS : F. Price and E. Stephens.

FORWARDS : L. E. Saxby (capt.), J. Davies, A. Carpenter, F. Wadley, G. Foulkes, J. Hemming, E. Comley, and F. Russell.

CHELTENHAM.

BACK : D. J. Walter.

THREE-QUARTERS : L. Goddard, Gwyn Davies, K. R. Thomas, and W. Fellows.

HALF-BACKS : E. Goodwin and George Davies.

FORWARDS : T. Harry (capt.), C. Fry, W. Holtham, N. Harris, T. Rodway, H. Beck, S. P. Lane, and C. Locke.

Referee : Major J. E. Partridge.

THE GAME.

Three o'clock on a typical November afternoon was quite late enough for the advertised start, but it was four minutes after this time before the teams made their appearance on the field, the visitors receiving a hearty reception from their followers.

Gloucester lost the toss, and Stephens started, the ball going to Fry, who found a good touch with his return. Gloucester worked out, and Stephens securing punted to Walter. The latter's reply just missed the touch-line, and Boughton sent to the centre. Goodwin was early penalised for off-side, and an exchange of kicks favoured Boughton.

Walter failing to gather, the City broke away with passing, but J. Davies' transfer went wide and a possible chance was lost.

HARD LINES FOR CHELTENHAM.

Gloucester were getting the ball in the scrums, but the backs could not make much headway. Cheltenham did much better a little later, Gwyn Davies bringing off a splendid run. He got to Boughton

when he passed to Fellows, but the transfer was ruled forward with an open line and only 30 yards to go. Gloucester relieved with useful kicks, and the backs attempted to open out. Abbey tried hard to break through, but was checked and nothing resulted. From a mark Saxby took a long shot for goal, but though the charge was disallowed the kick was a poor one.

EASY FOR BOUGHTON.

Centre play followed, with Gloucester having slightly the better of the exchanges, but nothing of incident occurred. Stephens once looked like doing something, but the effort petered out.

The City forwards controlled the ball in the scrums, but though Stephens got the ball away nicely the centres could not make any progress.

Cheltenham were beaten back through the City forwards, and when the ball came out on the visitors side the players kicked straight to Boughton, who took full advantage of these bad tactics.

POOR FOOTBALL.

So far there had been little of interest, and the standard of football had been very moderate. Gloucester, by reason of their superiority forward, held the advantage territorially, but they could not do much on the aggressive. Boughton, with a great effort from near midfield, just failed to drop a goal, the ball falling under the cross-bar and over the line for a minor.

On the drop-out Cheltenham gained a footing in the home half, but when the forwards heeled Goodwin was very slow, running across the ground aimlessly and tossing the ball to George Davies. It was poor tactics and lacking in intelligence.

Some liveliness was introduced into the play subsequently by the forwards, but of real class football there was nothing to enthuse over. Foulkes was prominent with a dashing forward burst, and Boughton later shone with some fine kicking, which kept play at the centre.

The City next opened out from the line out, but Abbey mis-kicked, and the ball went behind him to touch. There was a brief delay at this stage for one of the Cheltenham players to change his "nicks."

CHELTENHAM IMPROVE.

Resuming, there was a series of close exchanges with the forwards, but neither side appeared able to show any constructive football. Scrum followed scrum, and when the backs did get possession they more often than not kicked. At length Cheltenham did brighten up things and from a neat passing bout, Fellows received and raced ahead. In trying to cross-kick, however, Fellows sent the ball over the line, and it went dead.

Following the drop-out, the Cheltenham backs handled very smartly again, and Gwyn Davies cut out a beautiful opening. He, however, preferred to cross-kick instead of feeding his wing and a fine opportunity was thrown away.

Cheltenham pressed severely now and the City defence had a warm time. It held out, however, and gradually the Gloucester forwards shifted play to more favourable quarters. The City forwards heeled, but Stephens kicked straight to Thomas, who was, however, upset at once. Boughton then received from a punt down and found touch splendidly.

HALF-TIME :

GLOUCESTER Nil
CHELTENHAM Nil

Honours easy was a fair criterion of the play but on the whole the football was very disappointing. Cheltenham showed better form in the last five minutes before the interval, but threw away two good openings.

GWYN DAVIES' FINE TRY.

Play opened at midfield between the forwards on the restart, the Gloucester pack getting the ball but the backs doing nothing with it. Cheltenham for the first time the backs handled showed far better form[*sic*]. GWYN DAVIES, fed near the centre, cut through in brilliant style, and beating Pittman and Boughton, scored a brilliant try. The place kick failed, but the Town had obtained first [5 or 6 words unreadable].

Heavy dark clouds developed overhead and it was so dark that players were followed with difficulty. A huge punt to touch put Gloucester close, but when an attack was attempted it broke down badly. The City continued to exert heavy pressure but the backs never appeared capable of beating the defence.

In some heavy exchanges Stephens was laid out and had to receive the attention of the ambulance men. He was able to continue, and Gloucester worked hard to get on terms. Price, Stephens and Saxby combined in an effort to get through, but without success.

THE EQUALISING TRY.

The City, however, were not to be put off, and following a dash by Price, who got to the line, where he yielded to FOULKES, who scored in the corner. Boughton missed the goal points, but both sides were level.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

Play on the resumption was keenly contested with the forwards mainly engaged. The light was so bad, however, that it was almost impossible to see what was happening. Gloucester had the major portion of the play but could not get an opening.

Cheltenham attempting passing in their own 25, the ball was fumbled, and only a lucky flying kick to touch by Walter saved the position.

ATTACKS FAIL.

The City tried an attack on the left, Orpin shaping promisingly, but he was upset just as he was clearing. Quickly the game went to the left with Stephens away, but his transfer did not reach Loveridge, and Goddard dribbled right away, until Hemming made a great save by diving on the ball.

Cheltenham cleared by the aid of a penalty, and later Gwyn Davies was sent away by his namesake. This time, however, the old Cardiffian was well covered and fell to a smothering tackle.

DESERVED A TRY.

Subsequently play was hard, with the forwards contesting desperately. The City generally got a bit the better of the exchanges, but the support behind was feeble. Just inside the Cheltenham half George Davies, feinting to pass, tricked the defence and ran to Boughton. He punted over the latter's head and over the line, just failing to get the touch before the ball went out of play. This was a narrow escape for Gloucester, for the effort deserved a try.

The closing minutes were exciting, but there was nothing further scored and the match was left drawn.

RESULT :
GLOUCESTER 1 try (3 points)

CHELTENHAM 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

Gloucester were saved to-day by the forwards and the big kicking of Boughton. Had the Cheltenham backs obtained half the chances that fell to the home men they would have run up a big score. Gwyn Davies was outstanding for the Town, and his try was of a class that stamped him as an International player.

Except for a few thrills the game did not produce much in the way of high-class football. What little was exhibited came from Cheltenham, and the reputation of the Town three-quarters did not suffer to-day. Both in individual and combined efforts the Cheltenham men were far too good for their opponents and it was lucky for Gloucester their chances were so limited. Gwyn Davies excelled with two or three fine runs, and he left the defence standing, when he scored.

He had a lively wing in Leslie Goddard and I should like to have seen this youngster given more opportunities. Thomas was more capable than either of the City centres, and Fellows did all that was required of him.

The Gloucester forwards played strenuously all through, and it was principally through their united efforts that the Kingsholm men escaped defeat. In the scrums the City had all the best of it, and they heeled continuously. Price and Stephens did their part sufficiently well to give the home backs plenty of chances, but the third line never looked like scoring. The inside men were feeble, and I don't think Pittman had a single pass throughout the game. Loveridge, too, was also neglected, though he appeared to be up against a better man in Goddard.

The lighter Town forwards played with determination, and they were seen at their best when called upon to withstand some desperate rushes led by Saxby and Davies. Boughton generally kicked a

good length, but the Cheltenham backs played right into his hands in the first half.

For the second match Boughton was clean beaten by an opponent in the open field, and I am afraid this failure, repeated on Thursday at Oxford, will spoil his chances of going any further.

Cheltenham were clearly the superior team behind to-day, and I thought Gloucester lucky to get out with a draw.

Next week : Gloucester v. Newport, at Kingsholm.

JC