

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1912

RUGBY.

GLOUCESTER v. OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

DISORGANISED CITY TEAM BEATEN.

(By P.M.C.)

There are not many matches on the Gloucester Rugby Football Club's card which have caused so much anticipatory interest, speculation and conjecture as the meeting on Saturday at Kingsholm of Gloucester and Oxford University.

Last season, at Oxford – the first meeting between the clubs for eighteen years, the home men were too fast and clever for the Citizens, who were beaten by 4 goals (1 p) (18 points) to nil. W. Hall was injured that day and was off the field for nearly all the second half; and misfortune again dogged his and the Club's footsteps on Saturday, the brilliant little half being laid up with an injured knee. This was very hard lines indeed, and although Wilkes, the substitute, is a very promising youngster, he could not, of course, command the same confidence as Hall.

Hudson, Pegler, and Johns also were still out of the team. L. Hamblin took the stand-off half position, and Wilkes went to the centre.

Oxford were without Green and Monteath, Melle and E. T. Young filling the vacancies.

There was a slight drizzle falling just before the game, but the gate was a good one.

Encouraging applause greeted both teams when they lined out as follows : –

GLOUCESTER.	POSITIONS.	OXFORD.
C. Cook	Backs.	N. Reid
W. Washbourne	Three-Quarter	B. von G. Melle
Alec Lewis	Backs	A. J. Dingle
W. Wilkes	"	K. C. M. Hands
F. Webb	"	S. S. Steyn
W. Dix	Half-Backs	F. H. Knott
L. Hamblin	"	A. C. Williamson
G. Halford (capt.)	Forwards	L. G. Brown (capt.)
S. Smart	"	W. E. Thomas
G. Vears	"	E. Young
S. Millard	"	H. B. Moore
W. Dovey	"	F. W. Thompson[<i>sic</i>]
A. Saunders	"	E. F. Boyd
N. Hayes	"	P. H. Walker
J. Meadows	"	J. V. Rees

Referee : Mr. J. H. Miles.

THE GAME.

Halford started from the Worcester-street end and Dingle returned, but the punt went straight up in the air, and the Gloucester forwards were well up. They heeled from the first scrum, and a long punt reached Reid, but he replied finely to the centre. The Gloucester forwards had slightly the better of succeeding exchanges, but a kicking duel left play at the centre.

Getting the ball from the scrum, Dix punted up, but fine work in the line-out by the 'Varsity stopped Gloucester getting away. A beautiful bit of work between Hamblin and Webb, who passed capitally, looked very promising, but with a great sprint Steyn overhauled the wing man and effected a grand tackle within [1 or 2 words unreadable] of the line.

From the succeeding scrum Dix received, but he stupidly essayed to cut through with all his threes waiting, and when he did pass it was too late, and Oxford easily cleared.

Dix got the ball away nicely from the next scrum, but Wilkes muffed his pass badly. Reid marked cleverly under difficulties, but Cook returned well and left matters much as they were.

A magnificent open movement by the 'Varsity in which five or six of the visitors handled carried the game right into the Gloucester quarter. Hands punted across, and it looked any odds on a score, but Halford ran back as fast as he ever ran in his life and saved the situation.

The Gloucester forwards played up strongly after this, and a lucky flying kick by Dix sent the ball to Reid, who was upset in possession. Then the 'Varsity got off again at a tremendous pace, Williamson, Knott, Hands, Dingle, and Steyn handling finely, but just when the latter looked likely to go over Alec Lewis dashed across and brought off a fine tackle. Gloucester however, were now on the defensive for a minute or two, until a fine concerted rush enabled them to get out of danger.

Knott, picking up in the loose, flung out wide to Hands, and the latter essayed a pass to Mellé, but Alec Lewis intercepted and dashed away. He was, however, overcome by numbers. Cook gained ground with a good line, but then the 'Varsity went away again from the line-out, Knott again being conspicuous. Dix upset the Oxford passing, however.

A good attempt at intercepting and a good touch-finder by Hamblin put Gloucester into the Oxford 25. Once more, however, the Oxford men got the ball out, and their three-quarters had a golden chance, but the whole movement lacked finish and was quickly stopped. The ball went across to the other [1 or 2 words unreadable] again, but lobbing high passes gave the 'Cestrians plenty of time to get up and prevent a score.

Getting the ball from the scrum, Wilkes punted high, and Webb got well up, but in gathering the ball struck his chest, and it was ruled a knock-on. However, Gloucester were now gaining ground, the forwards putting in some fine, telling work with their feet. Gloucester got the ball out again, but the Oxford tackling was desperately keen, and the home men could not get clear.

The 'Varsity threes got going again, but the wing man was so far in front of Hands that when the latter was tackled he had no-one to pass to. It was a very poor show after what one had heard of the 'Varsity prowess. However, fortune favoured the 'Varsity in the next minute, as Dix being penalised on the 25-line Mellé landed a capital goal from a kick for which "No charge" had been ordered.

At once Gloucester rushed into the 'Varsity territory. Dix and Hamblin got the ball out nicely, and Washbourne made a great dash for the line, but he was pushed into touch a foot outside. Then Millard dived over, but was ruled held outside.

Oxford a minute later cleared from a penalty, and then with the ball flung out wide right across the field Wilkes had a lovely chance, but he missed the ball badly.

Gloucester's front rank were now playing with great determination, and Halford was very nearly over, but numbers were against him. The ball came out again from Dix to Wilkes, but the latter essayed a drop for goal with all his men waiting.

Oxford [word unreadable] momentarily, but the Gloucester front were more than holding their own in the scrums and the 'Varsity were defending. Gloucester were penalised for the loose-head, but very little ground was gained. The referee pulled both sides up for the same offence, and Oxford were penalised, but Hamblin could not quite manage it.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Oxford University 1 goal (p)
Gloucester Nil

Oxford restarted, but from the first scrum the Gloucester forwards, headed by Halford and Smart, went away strongly. Knott, however, got back and turned the ball into touch. The same player was off again a moment later, and Wilkes muddling Oxford reached the centre.

A high punt by Hands gave the Oxford front time to get up, but he failed to gather the ball. The Gloucester forwards again went away with a terrific burst, Halford leading, and carried the game right to the Oxford line, but after a desperate onslaught Reid touched down, and the 'Varsity got clear.

Dix opened out with a lovely pass after this, and Hamblin sent to Alec Lewis, who beat his man and passed to Wilkes. The latter made a desperate dash for the line and passed to Webb in the last yard, but the last recipient was collared.

The Gloucester forwards went away in a body from the succeeding line-out and with a concerted rush went over the line, Meadows being credited with a try. Hamblin failed with the goal-kick. The Gloucester forwards were now having much the best of matters and were gradually wearing the 'Varsity down and forcing them back.

The visiting threes, however, got going and cleared, and then Lewis put in a grand run and reached Reid before passing out to Webb. The latter was floored, but it was a grand move. Oxford were penalised for off-side, and Hamblin put in a fine kick, but it went outside.

Gloucester continued to have the best of matters in front, and in some desperate work in the loose they gradually gained yard by yard. Then again the Oxford three-quarters came to the rescue and carried the game to the centre, but Mellé was easily upset. Knott got away from the base of the scrum prettily, but the Gloucester marking was very close.

A penalty to Oxford gained them a nice lot of ground, but once more a superb rush by the Gloucester forwards carried the game right into the visitors' 25.

Here a free again brought them relief, and passing by the threes gained them a lot of ground. The ball came out nicely to Dingle and Steyn, but they were stopped by Cook and Webb and Gloucester quickly got out of danger. Hamblin held on too long, but a long kick by Cook put Gloucester well into the visitors' half.

The home forwards, working finely together, gained ground at nearly every scrum, but when the ball got right out the 'Cestrians were unable to press their advantage home, the visiting three-quarters being too fast. A penalty to Gloucester was taken by Hamblin, but it was at very long range and the ball went wide.

Gloucester by splendid work in front got well into the 'Varsity quarter, but Knott cleared. Hamblin punted up and the ball went into touch actually in the corner.

Oxford carried over from the line-out, and a scrum five yards out was ordered. Dix got the ball away, but the subsequent passing broke down badly, and Oxford were able to clear easily.

Hands and Dingle were set in motion again by Knott, but Cook received from the punt and marked. Oxford had another chance again a moment later, but a knock-on spoilt it all. Hamblin cleared with a long touch-finder, but Knott put in a brilliant individual run, beating all the defence but Cook.

Oxford were now in a fine attacking position, but their passing was poor and the Gloucester tackling was good. Eventually, however, more passing by the Oxford men followed, and after Knott and Steyn had both been well collared a weak kick sent the ball right into Knott's hands, and he dropped a lovely goal.

Gloucester at once rushed to the other end, but the Oxford three-quarters were too fast, and whenever they got the ball they made ground. The Gloucester forwards tried desperately hard to get over, but they could not get much "forrader."

The 'Varsity eventually retaliated, and after one or two passing movements which were stopped Knott gathered almost at the feet of the forwards, and cutting through finely put Hands in under the posts for Brown to goal.

RESULT :

Oxford 3 goals (1d 1p), (12 points)
Gloucester 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

Candidly speaking I must confess to a feeling of disappointment at the match – not at the result, because the 'Varsity were entitled to their win on the day's play, if not by so big a margin; but disappointed at seeing such a disorganisation of the home team behind the scrum, caused by the absence of Willie Hall.

It absolutely made all the difference – that and the extra pace of the 'Varsity backs. It was almost heartbreaking to see the splendid efforts of the Gloucester forwards undone and set at naught by the visitors' backs.

Time and again the 'Cestrian front, who after the first ten minutes practically dominated the situation, beat the opposition back into their own quarter only to see the Oxford threes get away clear with the ball.

Not that the 'Varsity backs were anything very great, except that their pace was some yards faster than ours, for with the exception of the last ten minutes they hardly ever looked like scorers, the passing being faulty and judgment and combination almost lacking. But that they won the game there is no shadow of doubt. It was the Gloucester forwards versus the 'Varsity backs.

Knott was in great form, and he scored the dropped goal himself and made Hands' try for him, but otherwise the visiting backs hardly rose above mediocrity.

I feel inclined to sympathise with the home forwards, grandly led by Halford, for having the fruits of their labours snatched from them. They played a sterling game throughout and deserved a better showing on the scoreboard. It was hard lines, but it is the luck of the game, I suppose.

Wilkes was weak, and beyond that there is very little need for comment, except that Cook fielded and kicked well and Dix worked like a Trojan at the base of the scrum.

Scorers : Gloucester, Meadows; Oxford, Mellé, penalty goal; Knott, dropped goal; Hands, try, Brown converting.

Next week : Cinderford, away.

THE HARRY DYKE FUND.

The collection taken on the ground for the widow of the late Harry Dyke realised £16 13s. The Gloucester players wore a black band on their left arms as a mark of respect for the late groundsman.

GLOUCESTER A v. ST. PAUL'S TRAINING COLLEGE.

At Cheltenham.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 1 goal (5 points)
Training College Nil

Bowen scored and Hayward kicked the goal.