

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1913

FOOTBALL.

RUGBY.

GLOUCESTER v. SWANSEA.

WELSH CHAMPIONS AT KINGSHOLM.

GLOUCESTER BEATEN IN A POOR GAME.

(By W.B.)

For the final match of the season at Kingsholm, Gloucester had a splendid attraction in the visit of Swansea, who came with a record of 26 wins, as against only two defeats (Newport and Cardiff) and six drawn games, entitling the All Whites to the undisputed claim of Welsh club champions for the season.

Gloucester could not claim anything like such a record of performances, but at home the City have always proved stiff opponents for Swansea, and the Welshmen had not won at Kingsholm since 1905-6.

After a spell of fine weather there was an unpleasant change on Friday, and the worst fears were entertained that the inevitable rain for the week-end would again spoil the match from the "gate" point of view. Fortunately the weather cleared up, and though dull and cold the rain kept off this morning, and there was a capital crowd of spectators.

Gloucester lacked the services of Smart (suffering with an injured leg), and Swansea had Bryn Lewis and "Dodger" Owen away.

The teams lined out at 3.35 as follows : —

GLOUCESTER.	POSITIONS.	SWANSEA.
C. Cook	Backs.	* Jack Bancroft
W. Washbourn	Three-Quarter	F. Williams
L. Hamblin	Backs	A. Thomas
W. Wilkes	"	H. Lewis
A. Hudson (capt.)	"	D. Williams
W. Dix	Half-Backs	O. Jenkins
A. Lewis	"	S. Jerram
G. Halford	Forwards	* D. J. Thomas
G. Vears	"	* T. Williams
F. Pegler	"	T. Morgan
N. Hayes	"	* G. Hayward
S. Millard	"	B. Williams
A. Cook	"	E. Morgan
J. Harris	"	* B. Hollingdale
C. Mumford	"	T. Parker

* Internationals.

Referee : Mr. J. H. Miles.

THE GAME.

The ground was in splendid order, and with no wind the conditions were ideal for a fast and open game. Halford started for Gloucester, D. Thomas getting in a fine return to the centre touch-flag. The City forwards, led by Pegler, made a few yards from the line-out, but from the first scrum formed Swansea heeled. Jerram fed Jenkins, but the latter was tackled by Dix. Jenkins, however, passed wide to H. Lewis, who got in a lucky kick to touch.

A fine rush by the home forwards saw Bancroft pick up and relieve, and the ball striking Dix in transit a Swansea forward was put on-side. He, however, was quickly upset, and the ball rolling loose Alec Lewis gathered and tried to break through, but was tackled.

A clever bit of combination between Jerram and Jenkins was checked by Dix and Hamblin, but a loose kick sent the ball down the field and past Cook. The latter threw back to a colleague, and the ball was eventually sent over the line for a minor.

Thomas marked on the drop-out, and Bancroft found touch with a fine kick. Inside the home half the Swansea backs were set going, but after passing all along the line D. Williams was sent to touch by Hamblin. A cross-kick by D. Williams sent the ball to Washbourn, but the Gloucester right winger failed to hold, and a knock-on was given.

Swansea continued to get the ball in the scrums, and there was another cross-punt by D. Williams. Harris this time gathered, and punted to touch when closely hampered. Cook gained relief for Gloucester with a nice kick to touch, but the City could not make much headway. The Swansea backs were fed again nicely by Jerram, but little ground was gained with the passing, the ball going from hand to hand straight across the ground.

Gloucester at length heeled, but Hamblin was smothered in trying to cut up the field. Then for an infringement Gloucester were penalised, Bancroft making a fine attempt to drop a goal. Swansea continued on the aggressive, and from a loose kick Cook failed to pick up, and Swansea rushed over. Off-side, however, was given, and Cook, with the resultant kick, found touch 30 yards down the field – a good relief.

Near the centre Gloucester got the ball out, and there was a round of passing. The marking, however, was very close, and Hudson, the last to receive, was well tackled. The ball rolling away, F. Williams dribbled on and picked up. There was a series of exchanges, but a deliberate knock-on brought the movement to a close.

Near the line Dix got the ball away and fed Cook, who punted out to a Swansea man. The latter threw the ball into the centre of the field with the idea of opening out on the opposite wing, but a knock-on ensued.

Gloucester gradually got out of danger, and from a free Cook sent play to the Swansea half with a lovely touch finder. Off-side by Washbourn on two occasions gave Swansea a couple of frees, but the visitors did not gain much ground, Cook replying well to Bancroft's kicks.

The game continued at mid-field, but was devoid of exciting incident. A visiting forward, in trying to dribble away, was checked by Lewis, who fell with his knee under him and was temporarily disabled. He, however, soon resumed, and was early prominent with a clever left foot kick to touch.

From a subsequent scrum Gloucester heeled, and Dix fed Lewis, who dashed through in fine style. He was brought down, but letting the ball go the forwards took it on until a visitor picked up and sent to touch.

Again Dix passed out to Lewis, and Hamblin putting in a short punt Hudson dashed up to gather, but Williams made his mark. Bancroft got the ball to the centre flag with his kick, and then Hudson mis-kicking assisted the visitors some 15 yards.

Next Gloucester put in a neat bit of work, but the marking was so close that little ground was gained. A rush by the Gloucester forwards saw a visitor's kick charged down, but the situation was saved. So far the play generally had been of a poor standard and lacking in interest.

A penalty against Dix for off-side enabled Bancroft to put Swansea in the home half, but for an infringement against the All Whites Cook put the game back, and Vears gained a few more yards for the City with a useful dash and punt to touch. Half-time was soon afterwards called.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester	Nil
Swansea	Nil

Bancroft resumed for Swansea, Hudson's reply going to touch inside the home half. The Gloucester forwards made a sharp rush from the line-out, but from the ensuing scrum Dix passed back wildly and away from Lewis. Jerram coming through kicked to Hudson, who was tackled directly he picked up. The ball rolled loose, and Cook tried to save but he was held, and a visitor gathering he sent F. Williams over with a gift try in the corner. From a difficult position Bancroft landed a lovely goal, and Swansea gained a lead of five points.

Gloucester resumed, and play favoured the City, who also gained a large slice of ground by the aid of a penalty. The position, however, was soon lost, and centre play followed. Gloucester[*sic*] at length got away with a terrific burst, which took some stopping, Bancroft being collared a few yards from the line.

An anxious moment followed for the Welshmen, but Jenkins, receiving from Jerram, punted to more favourable quarters. Swansea tried to open out, but the tackling was tremendous, men being bowled over in unceremonious fashion. Gloucester got the ball out, but Wilkes missed badly. Fortunately Hamblin recovered and got in a beautiful kick to touch. Here Swansea were penalised, but Cook made a poor attempt to land a goal, a minor resulting.

The Gloucester forwards were playing a good game, but the backs were poor, and Wilkes fumbling again let Swansea away. A clever reverse pass by the visitors secured a nice opening, but the pass to the wing was forward.

Swansea were now playing an extra three-quarter, but it could not be said the Welshmen displayed any degree of cleverness.

A loose dribble by the Swansea forwards was stopped on the City 25-line, but Gloucester soon cleared from this position to the centre. There was a promising movement after this by the City backs, but Hamblin had the misfortune to drop the ball after clearing an opponent.

Another mistake by Wilkes gave Swansea a footing in the home half, and then followed a lovely passing movement – easily the best seen so far. A score seemed certain, but deadly tackling saved the home line.

A punt out by Dix went to Bancroft, who with plenty of time took a drop for goal, but the ball went wide. Hamblin secured, ran out, and passed, but the transfer was missed and the Gloucester line narrowly escaped. Swansea continued to attack until Lewis relieved with a fine kick, Bancroft making his mark.

The Swansea custodian returned to Lewis, who ran round and passed. Wilkes received and handed to Halford, but the vice-captain knocked on badly.

Dix was instrumental in putting Gloucester well inside their opponents' half, but the visitors, sitting on their five points' lead, played the safety game to perfection.

By dint of well-judged kicks and close dribbling Swansea set up an attack, and Jerram feeding F. Williams on the short side of the scrum, the latter sprinted to Cook and cross-kicked, only to see a Gloucester man make his mark. The kick brought relief but Swansea returned, and a strong effort on the right only just failed.

Just afterwards, from a kick across, F. Williams gathered, but Hudson effected a smothering tackle and saved a score.

Play was confined to the home 25, and Dix getting off-side a penalty was given straight in front of the posts. No charge was allowed, and Bancroft placed a goal. The end then came.

RESULT :

Swansea 2 goals (1 p) (8 points)
Gloucester Nil

REMARKS.

Swansea have at last broken through their record of ill-success at Kingsholm, and let me say at the outset the Welshmen were clearly the better team, especially in the second half.

At the same time one could not fail to be keenly disappointed at the display the two teams put up. Without exaggeration it was one of the poorest games witnessed on the City ground this season, and spectators must have come away from the ground with a very poor impression indeed of the Welsh champions.

Compared with the Harlequins match it was a decidedly dull sort of affair, and the sort of game that is killing Rugby football. Swansea's scoring points were both given away by Gloucester, and I hardly think the referee could have seen that Cook was deliberately held by an opponent when in the act of going for the ball, or he would never have allowed F. Williams' try.

All the same, Swansea did infinitely more attacking than Gloucester, and here I may pay tribute to the City's defence, for it was easily the feature of the play of the home men.

The Gloucester forwards played a hard, vigorous game, but they took some time to get up "steam," and the pack has often been seen to better advantage. Vears struck me as being one of the best workers, with Millard, Harris, and A. Cook well in the running.

Outside the scrum Gloucester lacked combination, and individually none of the players reached their best. Dix now and again did not judge his passes with the best purpose, but he got through a lot of useful work. Alec Lewis was perhaps the most effective of the backs, with Hamblin close up. Wilkes was a failure, and I say again the lad is not class enough for centre. He was doing far better work at outside half, and to my mind the chopping of positions has had anything but the effect some members of the Selection Committee anticipated.

Washbourn had practically an idle afternoon, and Hudson, except for one fine tackle and a couple of fine kicks to touch, was not seen to advantage. Cook was splendid at full-back, and well held his own with Bancroft.

Swansea seemed afraid to let themselves go, and all through the men appeared to have a touch of the nerves. The forwards were a clever lot with a tendency to tactics not altogether pleasing, a great fault being the holding of opponents when not in possession of the ball.

The Welshmen were superior in scrum work, and for the major portion of the second half could afford to play Tom Williams as rover. Jerram and Jenkins combined well at half, but the three-quarters, though handling prettily at times, lacked the necessary confidence to make the line effective.

Bancroft gave a cool and finished display at back, and the Swansea man is still without a superior in the position. As a side, however, the "All Whites" on to-day's form are a good bit below the Swansea of old.