

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 1913

FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER *v.* HARLEQUINS.

LONDONERS' FIRST APPEARANCE AT KINGSHOLM.

FINE GAME DESPITE THE WEATHER.

DRAW OF EIGHT POINTS EACH.

By W.B.

No rugby team has been more in the public eye during the past few years than the Harlequins, and much satisfaction was expressed when it was announced that Gloucester had obtained a home fixture with the famous Londoners in return for a visit to Twickenham next season.

Though not accomplishing such brilliant work as in the two previous years, the Harlequins are still a powerful combination, and for the match with the City to-day they fielded a strong fifteen, especially in the back division, where four Internationals operated, viz. A. D. Stoop, R. W. Poulton, J. G. Burkett, and D. Lambert.

The Harlequins' style of play is one that appeals strongly to spectators, and visitors to Kingsholm were looking forward to a fast, open game as the result of the meeting with the City. In the Gloucester team Bowen and Saunders stood down.

The bright, fine weather in the early part of the week raised hopes that the match would be contested under more favourable conditions than recently experienced, but there was an unwelcome change for the week-end, and following a dull morning on Saturday rain commenced to fall at one o'clock and continued with increased severity.

Coming on at such a time was most unfortunate for the Club, for the "gate" was completely spoiled, and anticipations of a record attendance were shattered. The ground was very sloppy in front of the grandstand, but otherwise was not bad considering the drenching rain.

The teams lined out ten minutes late as follows, the visitors meeting with an enthusiastic reception : –

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	HARLEQUINS.
C. Cook	Backs.	D. O. H. Tripp
* A. Hudson (capt.)	Three-quarter	* D. Lambert
W. Wilkes	backs.	J. G. G. Birkett
L. Hamblin	"	R. W. Poulton
W. Washbourn	"	A. H. Hudson
W. Dix	Half-Backs.	* A. D. Stoop
A. Lewis	"	D. Cook
G. Halford	Forwards.	* H. L. Tarr
G. Vears	"	H. E. Ward
* W. Johns	"	R. O. O. Ward
N. Hayes	"	J. V. Rees
* S. Smart	"	H. L. Addison
W. Dovey	"	D. F. Sanders
A. Cook	"	H. B. Wakeham
S. Millard	"	K. M. Carnduff

* Internationals.

Referee: Mr. E. Roberts (Llanelly).

THE GAME.

Halford started for Gloucester, but the ball failing to go ten yards a scrum followed at the centre. Gloucester got the ball and heeled nicely, Dix feeding Lewis, but the latter's pass went astray and Hudson had to kick to touch.

From a subsequent line-out the Harlequins rushed a dozen yards or so, but Gloucester replied with a good rush, and Lambert being tackled in possession the City got past the centre.

A fine kick by Poulton sent the game back, and then a visitor forced a minor with a punt over the line. For getting in front of the ball on the drop-out Gloucester were ordered to scrum at the 25. Dix dribbled away, but kicked too hard, and Poulton gathering the International punted to touch.

From a scrum which followed the Londoners secured, and Birkett breaking away fed Hudson, who raced away, and cutting inside scored a lovely try. Lambert converted, and the Harlequins were five points up in as many minutes.

From the kick-off a visitor threw back to Stoop, who sent to Birkett. The latter came from the centre of the field in great style, but fell a victim to a low tackle by Dix. Immediately after the Londoners were off again, but Hudson was partly tackled by Washbourn and lost the ball.

The greasy ground caused the players to make mistakes in picking up, and possible movements were checked. Johns led a great rush by the City forwards to the visitors' quarter, where some close work was witnessed. Lambert, however, started a movement, and though Birkett missed, Poulton recovered and with a pretty swerving run and touch-finder transferred play to beyond the centre.

A free to Gloucester saw Cook make some 20 yards with the resultant kick, but the ground was lost from the line-out. A wild pass from Cook to Stoop was recovered by Poulton, who kicked neatly under pressure, and repeated the performance a minute later.

Johns was prominent with a fine bit of footwork, but Poulton, receiving a pass from the loose, dodged through beautifully and cross-kicked in front of the posts. Gloucester, however, were saved from a dangerous situation through a knock-on by an opponent.

A useful forward rush by Gloucester relieved the pressure, but a round of passing by the Londoners spelled danger until Poulton was safely tackled.

Using their feet, Gloucester came right away, Johns, Smart, and Halford being to the fore, but the Harlequins checked inside the 25. The ball getting into the open, the visitors soon cleared and Gloucester had to check a loose rush.

Poulton was conspicuous with another good run and pass to Lambert, but with the latter going strongly he was caught by the leg and upset by Hamblin. Gloucester worked well together, and Dix intercepting a pass from Cook to Stoop ran and cross-punted.

Lewis tried to gather, but failing, kicked across to the right wing. Hamblin coming up gathered the ball from the ground, and giving the "dummy" beautifully to Hudson beat Tripp and scored a wonderful try in a good position. The same player converted, and the equalising points were received with a gust of cheering.

The Londoners resumed, and exchange kicking benefiting them, Gloucester were confined to their own half. A breakaway by Gloucester came, but Birkett picked up and fed Hudson. A re-pass followed, but Birkett was stopped.

Washbourn had a chance of dribbling away, but was held by the leg by Hudson, and a penalty followed. The kick did not gain a lot of ground, but from the subsequent line-out Hayes burst away, and being well assisted by his colleagues the Harlequins were in danger.

The visitors slightly relieved, but the City backs tested the defence with a smart movement. Hamblin punting high to Lambert, the latter fumbled, and Hudson picking up put in a tremendous dash and put the ball safely over the line. Hamblin missed the goal points, but it was some satisfaction that the home team had taken the lead.

Halford replied splendidly to the drop-out, and play was contested in the Harlequins' half. The visitors, however, changed the venue with a series of exchanges, though Hudson was well smothered by Washbourn. Heeling by the visitors saw Dix again intercept cleverly, and beating Hudson the Gloucesterian ran to Tripp, whom he tried to punt over, but failed.

Gloucester made further headway owing to the visiting backs being at fault, but Lambert punted out strongly, only to see Cook make a fine return. Gloucester having secured a favourable position, opened out, but the passing went astray, and the Harlequins dribbled out to Cook, who kicked to touch nicely. Centre play followed, with the home forwards doing well, and the game was in even territory when the interval was sounded.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester.....	1 goal, 1 try
Harlequins.....	1 goal

The Harlequins restarted, and after a series of exchanges the ball went out of play at the centre flag. Gloucester were awarded a penalty for a scrum infringement, and with the kick Cook found touch twenty yards inside the Londoners' half. Heeling from a scrum, Cook slipped round the short side of the scrum and tried to feed Lambert, but the old International was smothered by several City forwards.

Another free fell to the home team, and Hamblin tried a shot for goal. The ball as it fell hit Stoop on the leg. He picked up and passed back, but the ball was missed, Poulton recovering.

More fumbling by the visitors close in looked dangerous, Gloucester narrowly missing scoring on two occasions. A free to the Harlequins brought relief, and then Stoop fed his backs from out of a bunch of opponents, but nothing resulted. The rival forwards shone in some effective loose work, and then Dix and Lewis worked the blind side prettily. Lewis punted well down, but Tripp ran out and passed. Wilkes intercepted, but lost the ball with a walk-over.

Heavy rain now fell, making matters more difficult for the players, but the game was always interesting. Gloucester attacked strongly, and on the right Hudson was only pushed to touch just in time. Lambert eased the pressure with a big kick, and then Cook pulled up the visitors very cleverly with a lovely kick to touch. Dix performed a similar feat a little later, which kept operations at the centre.

Dix subsequently opened out nicely, and Lewis was away with a pass to Wilkes, but the next transfer was knocked on. With some neat footwork the Harlequins made progress, and Birkett, being fed by Cook, the centre shook off a couple of opponents and got away, but he met with further opposition and was upset, his head being planted in the swamp.

Some pretty handling by the Gloucester backs enabled Hamblin to punt to Tripp, who returned and so little ground was gained. Subsequent play was of a loose forward character, in which Gloucester gained the advantage. A passing bout by the City backs lost ground, for Hamblin was tackled directly he received and lost the ball. The visitors, however, gained no advantage, and Gloucester well maintained their own in all phases of play.

The Londoners, however, were always dangerous when they got the ball, and the City defence had to be on the *qui vive* all the time. Just inside the Gloucester half a visitor broke away grandly and fed Stoop. The Gloucester men waited for the next pass, but Stoop retained possession of the ball and went clean under the posts with a clever try. Lambert took the easy place, but to the relief of the crowd the kick was charged down.

Gloucester dropped out, and the Londoners put on pressure to gain the lead. Some splendid running and passing looked promising, but Hudson on the one wing and Lambert on the other were tackled in time.

Still, the visitors kept up the attack, and but for Hudson a score would probably have resulted from a short cross-punt by Poulton. Soon afterwards Tripp forced a touchdown with a kick over the line.

Cook dropped out with a fine kick, the ball bouncing over Tripp's head and going to touch well inside the Harlequins' half. The Londoners, however, quickly reached the centre with a loose rush, and midfield play followed.

By smart work the Harlequins gradually obtained a good attacking position, and the last few minutes were an anxious time for the home men. A penalty was given the visitors for legs-up, but Poulton only punted, and Lewis returned well. Then Cook gained the much-needed relief with a fine kick to touch. From this point Gloucester rushed away, and when the end came play was in the Harlequins' 25.

RESULT:

Gloucester.....	1 goal, 1 try (8 points)
Harlequins.....	1 goal, 1 try (8 points)

REMARKS.

Considering the conditions, it was a fine game, and the result fairly represented the merits of the teams. Though some splendid forward work was witnessed at times, it was the clever back play which appealed to the spectators, and there can be no question the Harlequins' style, if generally adopted, would soon draw the crowds back to the Rugby game.

With the pace they possess behind the Harlequins can afford to take risks, and the ball was thrown about to-day even on their own goal-line. More than once the movements almost spelt disaster, for mistakes in gathering nearly let Gloucester in on two occasions at least.

In the early stages the Londoners were clearly on top, and with the Gloucester tackling none too sure the City line had several narrow escapes.

The try by Hudson was the result of an exceedingly smart bit of combination and judgment, and Poulton several times caused anxiety with his swerving runs. Gloucester, however, found their feet later in the game, and Hamblin's try was a fitting reward for some clever football. The City captain soon followed with his dashing effort, and from that point until a quarter of an hour to the finish Gloucester held the advantage territorially. During this period the home forwards put in some very effective work, but they made the mistake of trying to pick up when it was clearly the policy to use their feet.

The Harlequins came strongly every time their backs got the ball, and danger loomed ahead. Stoop, however, was the only player to get through, and he had the defence clean beaten with a feint to pass.

Now that Gloucester spectators have seen the Harlequins they are better able to appreciate the play of the Londoners. Of the ability and cleverness of their back division in attack, full recognition will be given Stoop and his colleagues. At scrum half Cook was no novice, and the captain, without being unduly prominent apart from scoring his try, did useful work. It was the three-quarters who took the eye, with Poulton ever in the limelight. The old Oxford captain was in delightful mood this afternoon, and those swerving runs of his were a revelation to those in the crowd who had not seen him before. In defence, too, Poulton was very active, and his kicking was splendid.

Birkett was the strong, powerful runner of yore, and he fed Hudson with good judgment. The latter ran with plenty of dash, but Washbourn kept a close watch on him after that first try. Lambert accomplished some good things, one effort of his in the second half being very fine. The forwards were a pretty useful lot all round – fast in the open and using their feet to advantage.

The Gloucester team are to be congratulated on their grand fight, for they were opposed to one of the best teams in the four countries today. Except for a tendency to pick up already referred to, the forwards rendered a good account of themselves, and played with splendid dash and enthusiasm.

The line-out work was particularly good, and the men fully held their own in the scrums. In the first part Stoop stood some distance back from the scrum, but after Dix, with his usual cleverness, had snapped up several passes intended for the Harlequin captain, the latter closed up the gap and put a stop to this manoeuvre. Dix was very nippy in getting the ball away, and all-round he gave a smart display. Lewis did his work at outside half with that neatness and effectiveness generally associated with his exhibitions, and in no respect did he give anything away.

The City three-quarters did not handle so often as the Harlequins, and the passing attempted was more of the orthodox style. Hamblin's try was the best effort on the side, and the centre proved himself one of the best tacklers in the team. Wilkes performed creditably, and if beaten occasionally by Poulton he was not the only member of the team that suffered an eclipse in this respect.

Washbourn did useful work with limited chances, and Hudson can be classed in a similar category with the left-winger. There was some anxiety as to whether the captain would be fit for such a big match, but he justified his inclusion by scoring a try – not a simple one by any means – and stopping the Harlequins on two occasions. The full-back play of Cook was well up to the City man's standard, and though Tripp did well he was not so safe as his rival in the position.

At the close of the match the crowd demonstrated their appreciation of the game by hearty cheering, the Harlequins coming in for a flattering reception on leaving the field.

Scorers for Gloucester : Hamblin and Hudson. Hamblin converted one.

Next week: Wednesday – Cheltenham, away; Saturday – Newport, away.