

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1897

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. STROUD

A SCRAMBLING GAME AT KINGSHOLM

NARROW VICTORY FOR GLOUCESTER

Local rivalry was in evidence at Kingsholm this afternoon, when Stroud appeared to oppose the representatives of the City club. Though there had not been so much talk over the fixture as formerly, the contest aroused plenty of excitement. On form Gloucester were made favourites, for whereas the City team had won each of their previous matches this season (Cheltenham, Clifton, Coventry, and Old Edwardians), the visitors had only just managed to scramble home by a try against both Nuneaton and Crumlin. Thus the representative records of the rival clubs up to to-day was as follows : –

										Points		
		Played.		Won.		Lost.		Drawn.		For.	Agst.	
Gloucester	4	...	4	...	0	...	0	...	79	...	0
Stroud	2	...	2	...	0	...	0	...	6	...	0

These figures speak for themselves, and would tend at once to show which was the stronger side. But in matches where local rivals are engaged records count for very little, and though Gloucester, on paper, held such a distinct advantage, it was not anticipated by anyone that a runaway victory would be recorded. On the contrary, bearing in mind the excellent fights made by Stroud in previous years, a really good game was looked forward to.

Owing to injuries or indisposition, several prominent players on either side were prevented from taking part in to-day's contest. On the Gloucester side, Ben Hipwood, Hatherall, R. Goddard, and A. Pitt were absentees; whilst A. L. Apperly, C. E. Miller, Denning, and H. Green were unable to assist the visitors. In the home team Joe Griffiths was tried at full back, J. Cook again appeared in the three-quarter line vice Goddard (who was suffering from a severe cold), whilst Lewis and B. Hough took the vacant positions in the front rank.

Although a lot of rain had fallen in the city during the last few days the ground was in good condition. The weather was dull and threatening, but the rain kept off. There was a splendid attendance of spectators, something like 1,000 Stroud enthusiasts coming over by the special train. The kick-off was announced for 3.30, but it was 15 minutes after this before the players entered the enclosure, both teams meeting with a good reception.

The men lined out in the following order : —

GLOUCESTER	Positions	STROUD
Joe Griffiths	Backs	H. Poole
W. H. Taylor (capt.)	Three-quarters	Lewis Smith
J. Cook	"	D. H. Haines
P. W. Stout	"	F. Miller
G. F. Clutterbuck	"	J. Holder
A. Stephens	Half-backs	W. Butcher (capt.)
J. E. Roberts	"	W. Daniells
C. Williams	Forwards	J. A. Hill
C. Hall	"	P. Smith
C. Rose	"	W. Beard
B. Hough	"	G. D. Smith
F. Goulding	"	W. Shewell
F. M. Stout	"	H. Snell
A. H. Click	"	H. Prosser
Bert Lewis	"	C. R. Jefferies

Referee : Mr. E. B. Holmes (Midland Counties)

THE GAME

Stroud won the toss, and the visiting captain elected to defend the Dean's Walk goal. Frank Stout started the game, the home team having to face the strong sun. Shewell failed to take the ball, and play opened in the Stroud half. A penalty kick was early awarded to Gloucester through Butcher failing to put the ball in straight. Percy Stout took a shot for goal, but though the attempt was a grand one it went wide of the posts, a touch-down resulting.

Poole dropped out, Cook getting in a nice return. From a line-out the City forwards burst away, but they were pulled up before going far. Then Roberts was prominent by getting away from a scrum, but the passing went astray, and the Stroud forwards dribbled back. From some loose work near the centre the ball travelled towards the Gloucester left wing, and Clutterbuck and Percy Stout made things warm for the visitors. Poole, however, saved at the critical moment.

A useful punt by the Stroud custodian gained relief, but Gloucester returned to the attack, and F. Miller being collared with the ball in his possession, the home team looked dangerous. A moment later the ball was kicked over the visitors' line, but only a minor resulted.

Following the drop-out Gloucester quickly made tracks for their opponents' goal, and but for the close tackling of Miller, Gloucester would have been almost bound to score. A couple of scrums followed in close proximity to the Stroud lines, from one of which the visiting halves got possession, but their passing was intercepted, and Roberts had a clear run in, but the whistle went for a knock-on. Play was confined almost entirely to the Stroud quarter, and twice in quick succession Gloucester almost scored.

For off-side play by the home half-backs Stroud were awarded a penalty. Poole took the kick, which was received by Percy Stout, who narrowly escaped dropping a goal with a fine shot. A touchdown resulted.

Poole kicked out, and after several scrums in mid-field Lewis Smith got possession and punted into touch well inside the Gloucester half. The home forwards, with a good rush and passing bout, quickly removed operations to the other end, where Poole was called upon to defend his goal. The Gloucester forwards heeled out nicely, but the visitors adopted smothering tactics with a good deal of success. For off-side play by Daniels, Stroud were again penalised. Percy Stout had another shot for goal but a grand kick was spoiled by the wind taking the ball out of its course.

On resuming Stroud kicked down to the home half, and Taylor only getting in a moderate return the visitors had a probable chance of scoring. Prosser, who received the leather, however, passed wildly and completely spoiled the opportunity. A combined rush by the city front rank transferred operations to well beyond the centre, and a couple of minutes later the visitors were forced to concede another minor from a kick over the line by Taylor.

Ensuing play on the drop-out was of a very scrambling character, and devoid of interest. The game was chiefly fought out in the Stroud portion of the ground, but Gloucester could not seem to make any headway. The City forwards were getting the ball cleverly in the scrums, and heeled out smartly, but though Stephens and Roberts handled the ball out all right the backs repeatedly knocked on. There were loud shouts from the respective supporters to "play up," but very little improvement was seen.

By some loose kicking Stroud worked their way towards the Gloucester 25, where Frank Stout got his side penalised for lying on the ball. Haines had the ball placed for him, but the shot, though well directed, fell short. Play during the next few minutes was very even, and nothing further of interest occurred up to the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester	Nil
Stroud	Nil

Hill re-started for Stroud, Gloucester being now favoured with the breeze which was blowing. Frank Stout only got in a poor return, with the result that the first scrum was formed in the home half. Here Butcher and Daniells passed out nicely to Miller, who essayed a drop at goal, but it was unsuccessful. Griffiths, however, had to touch down.

Percy Stout kicked out, but play settled down in Gloucester quarters. Working well together in the scrums, the Stroud forwards dribbled close to the Gloucester goal, where Griffiths was forced to kick into touch. A series of scrimmages ensued a few yards from the home goal, and matters looked very dangerous for Gloucester. At length, however, the City men relieved, and Clutterbuck with a flying kick conveyed operations beyond the centre.

Here some scrambling, loose play followed, out of which the ball was kicked to Lewis Smith. The latter was collared by one leg, but the popular Stroud three-quarter got in his kick amidst the shouts of the spectators.

Gloucester just now played up in something like their proper form, and they attacked vigorously. From passing by Roberts and Stephens a splendid opening was made for Clutterbuck, but the latter as soon as he got the ball slipped down. Gloucester, however, still kept up the offensive, and a weak kick by Poole gave Gloucester a line-out a few yards outside. From the throw-out Williams secured, and with a smart burst the vice-captain scored in the corner amidst loud cheering. Percy Stout failed at goal from the difficult angle.

Stroud re-started, and play now became desperately fast. The visitors, urged on by the shouts of their supporters, played up in splendid fashion, and from a long pass from Butcher to Lewis Smith the latter made a good attempt to get round. He was, however, pushed into touch near the quarter flag. Encouraged by this little success the visitors attacked splendidly, and the backs being continually given possession by Daniells and Butcher, the Gloucester defence was sorely taxed.

Two or three times the Stroud men looked all over scorers, but they were pulled up just in time. By dint of great efforts Gloucester relieved the pressure somewhat, but it was only momentary, as Stroud quickly got back again. From a free by Holder, Haines had a shot for goal, but only a minor resulted. Gloucester had to touch down as a result of the kick – a performance they had to repeat a minute later.

Percy Stout dropped out to Lewis Smith, but the latter failed to take the leather cleanly, with the result that the Gloucester forwards were on him in a moment. Getting possession of the ball the City team rushed right away, but over-anxiety spoiled what chance there was of scoring.

Gloucester were now having all the best of the exchanges, and one or two good chances of scoring presented themselves, but they were not accepted. Several scrums took place within a few yards of the Stroud goal, and the ball coming out to Taylor the latter took a drop at goal, but with no success.

Both sides were putting in all they knew. Gloucester struggled hard to increase their lead, but the backs could do nothing right apparently, and several fine chances were thrown away. From now to the finish play was very hotly contested, but nothing further of note occurred.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 try (3 points)
Stroud Nil

REMARKS ON THE GAME

Gloucester won, but the most partial of the home supporters would be forced to admit that they were very lucky in doing so. Without in any way diminishing the excellent fight made by the visitors, we must candidly confess the display of the home men was terribly disappointing. At its best it never reached anything approaching a decent standard, the majority of the players appearing to be very much "off."

In the forwards, where the city team were generally considered to be unapproachable by any pack in the county, the home men were often worsted, and especially was this the case in the tight scrums. The visiting forwards were continually getting possession in the second half, and had there been a little more finish to the attacks of the Stroud contingent the home line would have been crossed more than once.

The first half of the game was of a very scrambling nature, and it was not until after Gloucester scored that anything of a really interesting character was witnessed. The ball was given plenty of air at times, but neither side did much in the way of passing. For a period of about five minutes in the second portion the Stroud halves and three-quarters handled the ball very neatly, but, generally speaking, the passing attempted was not of a high-class description.

The home third line failed lamentably at times to take the ball, knocks-on being of frequent occurrence. Clutterbuck was often at fault in this respect, but he was not by any means the only delinquent. There was practically nothing in the play of any of the home backs to call for special notice. Percy Stout kicked well and, as usual, put in a lot of individual work, but there were occasions when he was at fault. At half-back Stephens and Roberts had plenty to do, and when opportunity arose they both made some good openings. The mistakes of those behind, however, nullified all their efforts to make headway.

Of the city forwards mention has already been made of the show they gave. To say the least the display was far removed from what is now expected of them. The men lacked cohesion, and when they did get a chance of doing something in the open the ball was generally kicked too hard. Hall appeared to be doing an immense amount of hard work, but the play of the eight lacked the dash and resource usually exhibited.

Joe Griffiths, at full back, was not very seriously tested at any point of the game, but he did not give one the impression of being a particularly safe custodian. He was very slow in getting to the ball, and appeared to take matters altogether too coolly.

With regard to the visitors, every man played for all he was worth. Hogg[sic] did several smart things at full back; whilst Miller and Lewis Smith were the pick of the three-quarters. Butcher and Daniells worked well together at half-back, and in the first half did a lot of smothering. Of the forwards, Percy Smith, Hill, Shewell, and Beard were the pick of a good, honest pack.

The gate money amounted to £48.

GLOUCESTER A v. STROUD A

A RUNAWAY VICTORY FOR GLOUCESTER

FIFTY-ONE POINTS TO NIL

So much interest centred in the contest between the premier teams that the game at Fromehall did not attract much attention, the attendance being very poor. Gloucester won the toss, and Lewis kicked off down hill for Stroud. Play hovered about half-way for a time. Then the visitors rushed to the Stroud end and Hall scored a try, which was not converted, the ball hitting the post.

After this the game continued to go against Stroud, and they had to touch down. Scrummages ensued in the home 25, and then Hayward crossed the line, Romans converting.

After this second reverse the home team played up harder, and managed by one or two bits of good play to get out of their half. This did not last long, and a third try was put on by James, who was followed a few minutes later by White, Romans converting the latter.

Curnock dropped a goal shortly before the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester A	3 goals (1 d), 2 tries
Stroud A	Nil

In the second half Stroud were at the double disadvantage of playing uphill against the wind, so that, with the big score already run up against them, their prospects were not bright.

Hall restarted the scoring, Romans majorising, both players repeating their respective feats later, bringing the score up to 30 points. James was the next to score, Romans failing at the place.

A pretty bit of passing let in Broady, Romans again doing the needful. Not long before the finish Hayward again got over, Romans this time being unsuccessful with the place-kick. James and Hall added further tries, Romans converting each.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ... 8 goals (1 d), 4 tries (51 points)
Stroud A Nil

REMARKS

A most uninteresting, one-sided game. Gloucester were far the better team all round, and Stroud played very half-heartedly after a time. In the second half they almost seemed to give up resistance altogether, and in view of the feebleness of the defence the size of the score is not surprising.

JC