

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1897

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL

THE FIGHT FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE COUNTY

GLOUCESTER WIN BY A PENALTY GOAL

The visit of the Gloucester team to the County Ground, Bristol, as usual created a big stir in local Rugby football circles. But it was not only amongst the respective supporters of the rival clubs that to-day's meeting created interest. Throughout the whole county the fixture was looked upon as the match of the afternoon, and the result of the encounter was anxiously awaited.

Taking a line through the respective records of these two teams, Gloucester appeared to have a splendid chance of repeating the victory gained last year, for whereas they had won all their engagements, and scored 82 points to nil, Bristol had sustained four defeats in succession, viz., to Blackheath, Leicester, Cardiff and Cinderford. Up to a week ago the Gloucester fifteen certainly flattered their supporters immensely, and the prospect of a brilliant triumph over their keen rivals was looked forward to with great satisfaction.

The wretched exhibition the City team gave against Stroud, however, caused many to lose confidence, and though the majority still appeared to look favourably upon Gloucester's chances of emerging successful, the game was not by any means regarded as a certainty. The fact that Gloucester had only once proved victorious on the County Ground (and that by the narrow margin of one try last season) was not overlooked.

In the anticipation of witnessing a keen and exciting game, a large number of Gloucestersians took advantage of the cheap trip run to Bristol by the Midland Railway.

With regard to the constitution of the teams, both clubs, fortunately, were able to place strong fifteens in the field. Gloucester were without C. Goulding (who is suffering with an injury to his shoulder) but otherwise the team was at full strength, Hipwood, Hatherall, Goddard and Pitt resuming their place *vice* Griffiths, Hough, Cook and Goulding respectively.

Additional interest was centred in the match by the fact (which was generally known) that the majority of the places in the county team to oppose the Midland Counties, at Kingsholm on Thursday next, had been kept open till after its decision.

The teams were composed as follows : –

GLOUCESTER	Positions	BRISTOL
B. Hipwood	Backs	J. R. Smithson
W. H. Taylor (capt.)	Three-quarters	J. Williams
R. Goddard	"	R. G. Parsons
P. W. Stout	"	R. Hussey
G. F. Clutterbuck	"	P. Hussey
A. Stephens	Half-backs	W. Needs
J. E. Roberts	"	R. Allen
C. Williams	Forwards	J. W. Jarman (capt.)
C. Hall	"	H. B. F. Bingham
C. Rose	"	J. Kislingbury
F. M. Stout	"	M. Courtenay
A. Pitt	"	– . Thomas
A. H. Click	"	G. A. Gell
T. Hatherall	"	E. Dymond
Bert Lewis	"	W. H. Barratt

Referee : Mr. W. Bowen (Cardiff).

There was a splendid crowd of spectators round the ropes when the teams entered the enclosure, and the players met with a great reception. The ground was in grand condition, and the weather was very favourable, though a somewhat strong breeze blew right across the ground.

Bristol won the toss, and Frank Stout kicked off. Kislingbury returned finely, and play opened in the Gloucester half, but a couple of free kicks to the visitors and smart play by the City forwards, took the game to within a dozen yards of the Bristol line. Smithson brought relief with a capital kick, and good work by the home backs carried operations to beyond the centre line.

The Gloucester forwards, headed by Frank Stout, rushed back in brilliant style, and Bristol were again placed on the defensive. Playing in grand form Gloucester attacked desperately, and on three distinct occasions the Bristol lines narrowly escaped being crossed. By clever passing Bristol removed the danger, but Gloucester got back again, and following a punt by Taylor the home team had to concede a minor.

On the drop-out play was exceptionally fine, the ball travelling up and down the ground at a rare pace. Gloucester, however, had considerably the better of the exchanges, and had two glorious opportunities of scoring, but they were not accepted. A mistake by Hipwood let Bristol in the Gloucester quarter, but the visitors relieved with a grand burst to half-way. Operations were being contested here when the interval arrived.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester Nil
Bristol Nil

Bristol re-started, and Courtney preventing the return subsequently dribbled almost to the Gloucester line, when Hipwood gathered and punted out. The home forwards showed up with a splendid dribble, which looked dangerous, but Hipwood saved grandly.

A couple of magnificent kicks by Percy Stout conveyed hostilities to the centre, and then pretty play between Stephens and Clutterbuck nearly resulted in a try for Gloucester, Smithson just saving under the posts. A scrum followed a few yards out, and both Needs and Allen coming round, Bristol were penalised. The position was a favourable one, and Percy Stout easily landed a goal, amidst tremendous cheering from the Gloucester partisans.

Jarman re-started the game, and play was fast and furious, both sets of forwards exhibiting great form. The Gloucester pack were getting the ball better in the scrums, and, wheeling finely, Bristol had plenty to go on with.

Twice in quick succession Bristol had to touch down, but eventually they worked down to the visitors' quarters, where Hipwood put in a brilliant save. Gloucester were not long in removing the slight pressure, and Smithson, getting a return charged down, a glorious opening presented itself, but it was thrown away. A minute later Stephens secured another fine chance, but Percy Stout held too long.

The last ten minutes resulted in some very fine football being exhibited, both sides working strenuously hard. Just on time Bristol made a determined effort to score, but they were beaten off.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal (p) (3 points)
Bristol Nil

REMARKS

One of the most exciting and keenly contested games ever witnessed on the County Ground. This was the general opinion after the conclusion of the match. Gloucester thoroughly deserved their win, for, taking the game all through they certainly did most of the attacking. In the second half, especially, the visitors had hard lines in not scoring at least two tries, the points being lost by the barest possible margin. As was generally predicted, the game was principally fought out amongst the forwards, and here both packs greatly distinguished themselves.

At periods the Bristol men were smarter in getting the ball in the scrums, but the superiority undoubtedly rested with Gloucester in all other departments. The wheeling and loose rushes of the visitors especially were a treat to watch. For individual merit, Williams, Hall, Rose and Stout for Gloucester, and James and Thomas for Bristol, were the pick. The backs on either side all did sound work, without being brilliant.

GLOUCESTER A v. BRISTOL A

THE HOME SECONDS WIN HANDSOMELY.

The junior teams of the above clubs met at Kingsholm in dull, cold weather, before a very fair attendance. The only absentee from the Gloucester team was W. Hayward. His place was taken by F. Westbury, who went forward, and B. Hough played wing three-quarter in Hayward's place. A start was not made till after 4 o'clock.

The teams were as follows : –

GLOUCESTER A. – G. Romans, back; H. Broady, B. Hough, J. Cook, and E. T. James, three-quarter backs; Car Cummings and G. Hall, half-backs; G. Barnes (captain), F. Westbury, W. Payne, W. Hughes, H. White, G. Smith, F. Oswell, and J. Manley, forwards.

BRISTOL A. – T. Burras, back; H. F. Denning (captain), J. L. Williams, R. Frost, and W. G. Marsh, three-quarter backs; C. Edwards and F. G. Rice, half-backs; P. Thomas, T. G. Cowerford, P. F. Dewar, J. Oates, E. Shellard, H. Dodds, E. Blizzard, and another, forwards.

Referee : Mr. A. E. Evans, Gloucester County Union.

Barnes started operations for Gloucester from the Dean's Walk end. Shortly after the start Bristol was awarded a free-kick which resulted in touch being found well within Gloucester's 25.

After a series of scrums Cummings obtained possession, and passing to Broady a great deal of ground was gained, Gloucester nearly scoring. From a line-out Cook made a smart, dodgy run, but though he had a clear field was not fast enough to score. Bristol then looked dangerous, but Romans relieved with a fine kick into touch. In the course of some scrambling play the Gloucester forwards got over, but the referee called them back.

Again Bristol were dangerous, and James brought relief with a well-timed kick, which Denning returned well. After some scrums in neutral ground the Bristol back claimed a "mark," and kicked well into Gloucester's 25. At this juncture a few of the Gloucester forwards headed by Smith, Westbury, and Hughes got the ball between them and dribbled down the field, Hughes eventually dropping on the ball over the line and scoring the A teamer's first try. Romans failed at the kick.

Immediately after the drop-out Gloucester were again pressing, and from a line-out Smith notched another try, Romans again failing at the goal.

Again Gloucester had it all their own way, and Hall scored a very neat try in the corner. Romans again failed to do the needful.

The ball was carried up and down the field, but, ultimately, settled in Bristol's 25, where a slight injury to Manley interrupted proceedings. From a long line-out Cook got the ball, and added another try, Romans again failing at the kick.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester A	4 tries
Bristol A	Nil

Bristol re-started, and after some uninteresting play one of the Gloucester forwards gained possession, and after a splendid run Hall scored, but he winded himself, and a Bristol man being hurt simultaneously, caused a long break.

On resuming Cook essayed to kick a goal, and made a creditable shot, but the ball just missed going between the uprights. The same player again showed to advantage, and after a tricky run transferred the ball to Broady, who scored in the corner. The kick again failed.

Romans was very useful just now with his long, well-judged kicks, one of which, being followed up well by Westbury and one or two more, ended in Gloucester scoring by the aid of Cook and Broady, the latter of whom ran round and scored another try, Romans converting amid cheers.

Then Barnes greatly helped his side by a long kick, and from a scrum a pretty bout of passing ensued, Cook especially shining. Bristol were now awarded two more free-kicks, but no ground was gained. Cummings, Hall, James, Cook, and Broady did a magnificent round of passing, and the last-named got over, but the referee did not allow the try.

Hall was responsible for a bit of fine play, which resulted in a scrum being formed almost on the Bristol line. From this Hall again was instrumental in Cook getting the ball; the last named made a fine run, but left his pass too late.

Some give-and-take play followed, Hall getting over the line; but again the referee called him back. Again Gloucester pressed, and Hall was noticeable for a fine individual effort, and, passing to Barnes, the latter scored again, Romans failing miserably at the kick.

Some long range kicking followed, when the whistle blew for no-side, leaving Gloucester easy winners as follows :—

RESULT :

Gloucester A 1 goal, 7 tries (26 points)
Bristol A Nil

REMARKS

Gloucester early showed their superiority forward. In the loose they were particularly effective. The pick of the pack were Westbury, Barnes, Hughes, and Smith.

The feature of the second half was G. Hall's excellent display at half. He initiated nearly all the passing bouts which went so far in gaining Gloucester's easy and meritorious victory. Hall should stand a good chance for Senior Club honours in the event of a vacancy occurring.

Cook was very quick, useful, and good at three-quarters, being ably seconded by James and Broady, the latter of whom showed to considerable advantage in both halves of the game. Roman's poor display of kicking was not entirely his fault, as on more than one occasion the ball was very badly placed.

A word of praise must be accorded the visiting captain, Dening, and the full-back, Burras, the former putting in some useful kicking and the latter tackling well.

Gloucester's display, taken as a whole, was most pleasing, while Bristol's was disappointing. A close game was certainly expected, and the Gloucester A teamers are to be heartily congratulated on having, for the first time, beaten (and by such a handsome margin as 26 points) Bristol A.