

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1897

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. SWANSEA

AN EXCITING GAME AT KINGSHOLM

GLOUCESTER STILL UNBEATEN

A TECHNICALITY ROBS THE CITY TEAM OF VICTORY

Next to Newport and Cardiff, the annual fixture with Swansea is rightly regarded as the most important on the City club's card. For something like ten years the teams have met in healthy rivalry, and some of the keenest games witnessed in Gloucester have been between to-day's opponents.

At home Gloucester have always performed well against the All Whites, and out of the eleven previous games decided here, each club claimed four wins, the other three being drawn. In the matter of scoring, Gloucester hold the advantage, having scored 6 goals 5 tries to their opponents 2 goals 7 tries.

This season, the splendid performances of Gloucester have attracted the attention of the Rugby football world in general, and for weeks past opposing teams have put forth strenuous efforts to crack the record. How Llanelly and Newport failed in the task is so well known to need no repetition.

To-day, Swansea was afforded the opportunity of bringing about the downfall of the City club, and, of course, considerable speculation was indulged in as to whether they would succeed.

The All Whites, like Gloucester, have been very successful up-to-date this season, and came with an excellent record. Out of 12 matches played only two have been lost (Llanelly and Newport) – and these by small margins – as against ten wins. In the matter of points, Swansea had scored 89 to their opponents' 24.

These figures did not compare favourably with those possessed by the home club (13 matches played : 11 wins, 2 draws ; points for 132, against 3), but here again, as in the case of Newport, the visitors had met stronger teams than Gloucester had.

For such an important contest it was a great pity that the clubs were unable to be represented at full strength. On the Gloucester side the Brothers Stout were the principal absentees (both doing duty for the South against the North at Carlisle); whilst Swansea were deprived of the valuable services of Bancroft, who was suffering from an injury to his foot, sustained in the Neath match last week.

The City club were fortunate in securing the assistance of W. H. Devonshire in the place of Percy Stout, the old Blackheathen and ex-Gloucesterian journeying down from London specially for the match.

Devonshire was partnered in the centre by H. Broady, who has been performing with great promise for the A team.

For Swansea, Bancroft's place was taken by D. Austin, who was considered a very capable reserve.

The weather was dull, and a mist also enveloped the ground.

The attendance of spectators hardly came up to last week, but there was a good crowd round the ropes – something like 3,000.

The Swansea team arrived on the ground in good time, but it was 2.55 before the players entered the enclosure, the men lining up as follows : –

GLOUCESTER	Positions	SWANSEA
B. Hipwood	Backs	D. Austin
W. H. Taylor (capt.)	Three-quarters	H. Morgan
H. Broady	"	D. Rees
W. H. Devonshire	"	G. Davies
G. F. Clutterbuck	"	F. Gordon
A. Stephens	Half-backs	D. James
Car Cummings	"	E. James
C. Williams	Forwards	T. Jackson
C. Hall	"	S. Rice
C. Rose	"	A. Jones
A. H. Click	"	S. Harris
T. Hatherall	"	Livingstone Davies
A. Pitt	"	W. Parker
F. Goulding	"	Hopkin Davies
Bert Lewis	"	R. Thomas

Referee : Mr. McGawley (Rugby).

THE GAME

The ground was in capital condition. Swansea won the toss, and elected to defend the Dean's-walk goal. Hall kicked off, and after an exchange of punts George Davies secured a free. The Swansea three-quarter punted into touch, but from the throw-out the home men secured and got off with a good dash, but G. Davies picked up nicely and cleverly screwed into touch at the centre.

Several scrums followed at this point, from one of which Stephens was given possession, but his pass was not taken, and the Gloucester men getting off-side, were accordingly penalised. The visitors gained little ground by the kick, but at length a passing movement gave Swansea a slight advantage. Devonshire (who was playing wing to Taylor) earned applause for a good tackle. A minute later Taylor distinguished himself in a similar manner.

A smart bit of work by Arthur Jones looked dangerous for Gloucester, but Hipwood saved splendidly, though he got slightly injured in doing so. The home custodian, however, quickly recovered.

On resuming, Cummings snapped an opponents' pass, and went off down the field in clever fashion. The half-back threw wide to Clutterbuck, but the pass was a forward one, and the wing man had to come back after beating several players in an exceedingly smart manner.

Play now hovered in midfield, and was very exciting. Clutterbuck greatly distinguished himself with clever kicks, and following up one effort the Gloucester forwards went over their opponents' line and scored, but they were called back for an infringement. The Gloucester halves got possession from the ensuing scrum, and Taylor, getting hold, punted down to Austin. Racing hard the City captain bothered the visiting custodian, and the ball getting amongst the city forwards it was taken right to the Swansea line. The visitors, however, saved at the critical moment. Ensuing play went all in favour of Gloucester, and the home men made desperate attempts to cross but they were beaten off. They, however, forced a minor.

On the drop out Broad was prominent with a splendid dash, but just as he looked like getting clear he was brought down from behind. By a big effort the Swansea forwards worked to the centre, but Devonshire sent them back with a nice punt, which George Davis allowed to roll into touch. Play continued to be fought out in the Swansea half, and Taylor made the visitors concede another touchdown from a fruitless drop at goal.

The drop-out was well replied to by Taylor, and Austin being brought down before he could return, Gloucester had a splendid chance of scoring, but it was not accepted. A useful dribble by the Swansea forwards relieved their lines, and the movement being continued by Hopkin Davies, the Gloucester captain had to run back to save. Though it was totally impossible for Taylor to get off the ball he was penalised by the referee.

The Welshmen gained little by the kick, the ball going into touch a few yards down the field. From the line out Hatherall and Williams got off with a fine burst, and Austin only saved by kicking into touch. A minute later Clutterbuck and Broady were conspicuous with a pretty movement, which nearly let the latter in, but he was just collared in time.

The game was fiercely contested, both teams working strenuously hard. The Swansea backs receiving from the James's, executed a nice round of passing, and though Rees mulled, the ball was kicked towards the Gloucester goal, where a score was only averted in the nick of time. For a moment or two Gloucester were severely pressed, but Cummings and Goulding brought relief. By dashing forward play the city team paid a brief visit to the Swansea end but the visitors got back, and attacked desperately.

The Swansea forwards heeled out repeatedly, and several times in quick succession the backs only just missed scoring. The visitors, however, were not to be put off, and following a quick pass out from the scrum Gordon dashed over with a corner try, amidst the delight of the visiting players. The place-kick was a difficult one, and G. Davies failed to add the extra two points.

Gloucester re-started, and the Brothers James were penalised twice in quick succession for not putting the ball in straight. The home team, by the aid of kicks, got into their opponents' territory, and a well-judged punt by Stephens further improved matters.

Devonshire securing out of some loose play brought off an exceptionally strong burst, hitting off several would-be tacklers in fine style. He, however, was finally brought to earth just inside the quarter flag. Play was being contested in the vicinity when half-time was called.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Swansea	1 try
Gloucester	Nil

Evan Jones re-started hostilities, and after a series of exchanges play settled in the home half. G. Davies was early prominent with a splendid dodgy run which gave the home men a good deal of anxiety. The centre passed to a colleague, and a desperate assault followed on the home lines, but eventually the pressure was warded off, and Clutterbuck with a useful kick sent down to Austin. The latter made his mark, and G. Davies had a shot for goal, but the ball fell short. Hipwood received, and punted out to outside the quarter flag, where operations were contested for some few minutes.

At length the City front rank got off with a fine rush, but Rees stopped them cleverly. The home forwards in the two succeeding scrums heeled out nicely, and Cummings started one beautiful bout of passing, but Taylor missed the ball completely. Broady, however, got round and prevented the Welshmen getting an opening. Just now the tackling on the part of the Swansea men was too keen to suit the referee, and Parker was brought out of the scrum and warned amidst the cheers of the spectators.

Hostilities were now fairly evenly contested at the centre, and little of note occurred. The James's tried their very best to get the ball away, but several times they missed, and Cummings taking advantage once picked up and passed to Clutterbuck, who punted down the ground. There was a race for possession, but G. Davies secured, and with a screw kick with his left foot staved off what looked a dangerous movement. The effort, however, led to Gloucester finding a footing in their opponents' half, and they made desperate efforts to effect a score. Devonshire and Lewis were especially conspicuous for dashing bursts, but they were brought down outside the goal-line.

By superhuman efforts Swansea worked out to mid-field, but Devonshire, with a grand run nearly half the length of the field, was only pulled down a few yards outside, amidst intense excitement. From the scrum which was formed the ball got amongst the home backs, and Broady getting hold ran over near the posts amidst loud and prolonged cheering, umbrellas, sticks, and hats being sent flying into the air.

Taylor had an anxious moment as to who he should depute to take the kick at goal, but his choice eventually fell on Stephens. For getting over the mark the charge was disallowed, and Stephens placed the ball for himself. The Gloucesterian took a steady shot, and piloted the oval neatly between the uprights, at which success there was another outburst of applause.

But the enthusiasm was short lived, for immediately Evan James ran out to the referee and appealed against the goal being allowed on the ground that Stephens had no right to handle the ball after Taylor. It was evident Mr. McGawley was with the Swansea captain on the point, for after conversation with the Gloucester captain the men were directed to take up their positions on the 25 mark.

On the re-start both teams struggled desperately, and play was exceptionally fast. The Swansea men worked to the Gloucester half but Bert Lewis and Cummings prevented them getting too dangerous by useful punts into touch.

Once the visiting forwards were seen making tracks for the home goal, but Lewis again proved a stumbling block, for gathering the ball splendidly he saved grandly.

The City men were now getting rather the worst of the exchanges, but they exhibited a grand defence. From a long kick to near the home line, Gordon dashed down the right wing, and looked like scoring, but he was pushed into touch a couple of yards outside. A couple of lines out followed at this point, but Gloucester cleared, and directly afterwards the whistle sounded "No-side."

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 try (3 points)
Swansea 1 try (3 points)

GLOUCESTER'S GOAL

AN APPEAL TO BE LODGED

Gloucester will appeal against the referee's decision in regard to the disallowing of their goal. After Mr. McGawley had ruled "no charge" against the Swansea men, the Gloucester captain asked him if he could hand the ball to Stephens, and he replying in the affirmative. Taylor accordingly did so. It appears that as soon as the kick was taken it occurred to the referee that he was wrong, and on appeal from F. James he disallowed the point. Mr. Boughton is of opinion the City club have got a good case, and the result of the appeal will be anxiously awaited.

REMARKS

To be unable to claim a brilliant victory owing to a technicality is terribly hard lines on Gloucester. Still, the result, as it is at present, was received with delight by the home supporters. Swansea maintained their three points' lead for such a lengthy period, that we were beginning to think the record – of which all Gloucesterians are so proud – was going to be smashed. But the City team were not going to lose their clean sheet without a desperate struggle, and the manner in which they played up half-way through the second portion was a treat to witness. The enthusiasm when Broady got over near the posts almost baffles description, and from this point to the finish the excitement – which all through the game was pretty high – was at fever heat.

Coming to the game itself, it was terribly fast, and there was hardly a dull moment. Both teams played with tremendous dash, and though at times play was rather scrappy, there were many brilliant incidents. Taking the game as a whole, an impartial observer would be inclined to place Swansea as the better team, but the advantage was very slight indeed. Both sides had chances of scoring, but where the visitors beat us was in their concerted attacks. When they got near the line they were exceptionally dangerous, and it took the united efforts of the City team to keep them out.

The movement which ended in Gordon getting over was an exceptionally smart one, but there was considerable doubt as to whether or not the Swansea man went into touch. Many spectators who were on the spot declared that he did so, but the referee was against the home men, and the latter bowed to this decision without cavil.

Comparing the rival packs of forwards, the sides were very evenly matched. In one particular Swansea beat the home eight very often, and that was in getting the ball in the scrum. But how materially the visiting rank was assisted by the Brothers James to gain this advantage was palpable to everybody. Time after time the ball was made to curl into the feet of the All Whites, and, with a perfect understanding between the forwards and halves, it was out almost immediately. The referee spotted the "trick" on several occasions, but if he had penalised the Brothers as often as he should have done, the game would have been entirely spoiled.

In other departments the Gloucester pack played up to their great reputation, and brought off some superb rushes. Individually and collectively the whole eight did splendidly, the tackling, except in one or two instances, being close and sure. Bert Lewis was often brought out of the scrum as flying half-back, and the ex-St. Mark's man did some grand work whilst officiating in this capacity.

Of the Swansea forwards, they deserve every praise for a really fine display all round. There were times when one or two individuals tackled unnecessarily rough, but one can excuse this, perhaps, when it is considered what hung on the result. Rice, Arthur Jones, and Hopkin Davies were always prominent in the open, Jones being the pick of the bunch.

At half-back, Stephens and Cummings were opposed to two of the trickiest customers operating behind the scrum to be found anywhere. As before mentioned, the James's are not particular about taking advantage of the referee, and they did their very best to get the "blind side" of that official to-day.

For all this, however, they are an exceptionally clever pair, and with less experienced opponents than Stephens and Cummings, would, no doubt, have made things warm for the Gloucester three-quarters. As it was the Brothers got set going very often, but more than once they were beaten by Cummings and Stephens.

Both the home halves worked with great energy, Stephens showing up better than for some weeks past. Cummings was nearly always in the right place, and some of his short, tricky runs proved very effective.

Of the rival back divisions, the visitors were, perhaps, the smarter taking them as a set, but the home third line performed with great credit. Taylor played in the centre *vice* P. Stout, and the captain (though he missed one apparently good chance) did a lot of collaring and kicking.

Broady, on his day's play, was clearly better than Cook or Goddard, and if he retains the form he showed this afternoon he should be a fixture. He played with great dash and resource, and before he scored he had several bursts for the line.

Devonshire proved a host in himself, and Gloucestersians generally were immensely pleased with his display. He made one or two strong runs, and his tackling and saving was beyond reproach. Clutterbuck, on the other wing, was in his very best form, and though he got few passes he did some sound and effective work in other respects. Of the full backs both custodians did creditably. – The gate money amounted to £62.

GLOUCESTER A v. ST. MARK'S

THE A TEAMERS BEATEN AT LAST

The above teams met at Sandhurst. The A team were still without Barnes, the captain (whose knee is not yet well enough to allow him to play); Broady was playing for the senior club; and Fred Griffiths was taking G. Romans' place at back.

Some A teamers failed to turn up, but substitutes were found. The ground was in good condition, and a few spectators lined the touch-lines. The A team were playing one short for a quarter of an hour in the first half.

At 3.25 o'clock the teams lined out as follows : –

GLoucester A. – F. Griffiths, back; James, J. Stephens, Hayward, and Webb, three-quarter backs; Lansley and G. Hall, half-backs; Payne, White, Manley, G. Smith, Hughes, Barnes, W. Webb, and Westbury, forwards.

ST. MARK'S. – G. Griffiths, back; Charlo Cummings, A. Cummings, W. Cook, and G. Kingscot, three-quarter backs; Jim Griffiths and Pinnock, half-backs; D. Smith, J. Corbett, G. Haines, E. Haines, T. Lane, G. Williams, [J.] Kingscot, and Partridge, forwards.

Referee : G. H. Hayward.

St. Mark's kicked off, and rushing up the field, put the Gloucester line in danger, and J. Kingscott got over in the corner, thus scoring the second point against the A team this season. No goal resulted.

The Saints' pressed hard, and got over again, but the ball was kicked dead. Gloucester A were called back for off-side play from the kick-out. Give-and-take play followed, and eventually G. Haines got over for St. Mark's. No goal was kicked.

St. Mark's still pressed, and Gloucester were forced to concede a minor. Play was of a somewhat scrambling nature, until Barnes got off-side and a splendid shot for goal bounced on the cross bar and dropped into the field of play. St. Mark's still pressed when half-time was whistled.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

St. Mark's	2 tries
Gloucester A	Nil

On resuming Gloucester were favoured by the hill and pressed. James claimed a mark, but the ball was charged down before he could kick. The play ranged up and down the field, Hall getting away nicely, but he held the ball too long and lost an opportunity of scoring.

St. Mark's still pressed and despite the fact that Gloucester playing to a certain extent down hill they were getting the worst of it. A. Cummings tried a drop for goal, but the ball just went wide. Play was up and down the field, St. Mark's pressing. Charlo Cummings claimed a mark but Griffiths' kick fell short.

Gloucester at last played up a bit better and got near the Saints' line, but to no advantage, and the whistle soon sounded "No-side," Gloucester retiring badly beaten by 2 tries to nil.

RESULT :

St. Mark's 2 tries (6 points)

Gloucester A Nil

REMARKS

The two tries scored against Gloucester are by no means a criterion of the beating they got. They were out-classed forward badly, and the halves were quite off colour, letting the St. Mark's pair beat them continually. The three-quarters did not play at all a good game, and no passing worth noticing was indulged in by the Gloucester back division.

The St. Mark's men played up very hard and deserved to win as they were having most of the game all through. Once or twice there was a slight tendency to rough play on both sides, and the referee had to caution members of each team more than once. It was not an uninteresting game to watch, but Gloucester performed miserably as compared with what they have been doing lately.