

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1898

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. DEVON ALBION

THE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE SOUTH-WEST

A KEEN GAME

GLOUCESTER VICTORIOUS

TWO PLAYERS ORDERED OFF THE FIELD

The return match between these clubs was played at Kingsholm this afternoon. Exceptional interest was centred in the fixture, as the game was generally looked upon as a veritable battle of the giants. Both teams held unbeaten records as regards matches with English opponents, and the struggle for the supremacy, therefore, was rendered all the more exciting.

In the first encounter between the rival teams a drawn game was recorded, neither side scoring. With the advantage of playing on their own ground, the supporters of the Gloucester team expected to see the Albion colours lowered this afternoon, though it was generally voted the game would be an exceedingly close one.

Gloucester placed a powerful team in the field, the only absentee being Broady, who was injured the previous week at Llanelly. The City club had hoped to have the services of W. H. Devonshire in place of Broady, but the ex-Gloucestrian could not assist, and the vacancy was filled by C. Smith, of the A team.

The visitors (who broke the journey from Plymouth last night at Bristol) were also strongly represented, though Cliff Bowen, Marshall, Biddings, and Gilbert were unable to turn out. In the ranks of the Albion, however, were three ex-Welsh players in Hughes, Jones, and Sims, about whose transfers there was some bother with the Welsh Union. The men had permission to play to-day, which the Albion took full advantage of.

The weather was dull and cold, and the ground, after the rain of the previous day, was very greasy on the surface. There was a good crowd of spectators present at the time fixed for the kick-off. Owing to the similarity of the colours of the two clubs the home team appeared in the county jerseys. It was 3.20 when the players entered the enclosure, the teams meeting with a capital reception. After the usual preliminaries the men lined out in the following order : –

GLOUCESTER	Positions	ALBION
B. Hipwood	Backs	H. Gloyns
C. Smith	Three-quarters	G. Woodhouse
W. H. Taylor (capt.)	"	J. Vivyan
P. W. Stout	"	W. Hughes
G. F. Clutterbuck	"	A. Foster
A. Stephens	Half-backs	W. Jones
Car Cummings	"	J. Duffin
C. Williams	Forwards	W. Spires
C. Hall	"	W. Peard
C. Rose	"	G. Sowden
F. M. Stout	"	W. Berry
F. Goulding	"	F. Ward
A. H. Click	"	J. Johns
B. L. Watkins	"	A. Sims
G. H. Smith	"	G. Whitall

Referee : Mr. W. Bowen (Cardiff)

Touch judges: Mr. F. Tandy (Gloucester) and W. George (Devon Alb).

THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss, and elected to defend the Dean's Walk goal. Spires set the ball rolling against the breeze, and Taylor's return being charged down Ward picked up, and passed to Whitall, who was only pulled down on the verge of the line – a narrow escape for Gloucester. The City captain sustained a slight injury in coming in contact with his opponent, and a stoppage ensued. Taylor, however, was soon able to resume, amidst cheers.

From the first scrum formed Gloucester gained some dozen yards or so, but another delay was caused owing to Clutterbuck being knocked out. On resuming, the Albion backs tried some passing, but ground was lost as a consequence, the Gloucester centres dribbling to well beyond the 25 flag. Here Duffin got hold and passed to Vivyan, who sent on to Woodhouse, but the wing man was splendidly bowled over by Hipwood.

Play, however, still favoured the visitors, and from another bout of passing Foster was only pushed in touch in time. Stephens brought relief for Gloucester with a tricky effort, but Vivyan, getting a good pass from Jones, cleverly beat Smith, and got well under weigh before being hauled down from behind by Percy Stout. The game continued to hover in the home half, and from a loose rush the ball was kicked over the line, and Percy Stout had to send dead – the Albion thus gaining first blood.

Percy Stout dropped out, Vivyan returning splendidly to the Gloucesterian, who only got in a poor reply into touch. A useful bit of play by Rose enabled Gloucester to gain a few yards, and then Stephens initiated a bout of passing. Taylor got a good pass, but before the home captain could get off he was pulled down.

Play was fast and furious just now, and excitement was very keen. Fielding a kick by Woodhouse, the elder Stout got in a magnificent punt into touch beyond the centre. From the line-out a Gloucester forward made his mark, and by the aid of the kick the home team made further ground, Frank Stout preventing a return. Having gained a footing in their opponents' end, Gloucester worked grandly together.

From a scrum Cummings secured and passed to Stephens, who made a beautiful opening. Yielding up possession at the right moment to his captain, Taylor put the finishing touches on a pretty movement by scoring a capital try, amidst loud and prolonged cheering. Percy Stout took the kick at goal, but he failed to add the extra points.

Devonport re-started, but by the aid of another mark Gloucester sent the game inside the visitors' quarters. Here Cummings started another bout of passing, but Percy Stout failed to take the ball from Taylor, and Woodhouse kicked down to Hipwood, who returned nicely. The Gloucester forwards exhibited some grand forward work, and operations were confined to the Albion half.

By fast following up the home forwards prevented a couple of returns, but Vivyan managed to turn the ball into touch at the right moment. Working well together the City forwards attacked strongly, but they were beaten off. A splendidly judged kick by P. Stout gave Gloucester the advantage again, and Taylor spoiling an attempt at passing a good opening presented itself, but Woodhouse and Hughes saved between them. A good rush by the Albion forwards enabled the Devonport men to clear, but Goulding stopped with a clever punt to touch.

Play was vigorously contested just now, both teams working tremendously hard. The game hovered between the centre and the Albion 25, but neither side could get an opening. Both back divisions put in some fine saving work, and they also tackled unerringly. Jones and Duffin set their three-quarters in motion once or twice very smartly, but the close attention of the Gloucester team prevented much ground being gained.

At length, after Stephens and Cummings had several times baulked the Albion half backs, Duffin got out a wide pass to Woodhouse, who kicked down to Hipwood. The Gloucester custodian met the ball alright, but he lost possession, and the visitors almost scored in the corner.

Several tight and exciting scrums and lines-out followed at this point, but the home men eventually relieved. Just before the interval Percy Stout got hold, and secured a grand opening, but he was whistled back for a previous infringement.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 1 try
Devon Albion Nil

Frank Stout re-started, and Spires' return being charged down by Click and another, the ball went to Gloyns, who, however, punted finely down to Smith. The latter mis-fielded, and only just managed to get into touch at the centre. From the throw-out the ball got amongst the Albion backs, but Clutterbuck snapped up a long pass and handed to Taylor (who had come on the outside). The Gloucester captain made a big effort to get round, but Foster succeeded in putting him into touch.

By a forward burst the visitors worked out to the centre, where Hipwood was prominent with a clever screw kick into touch with a host of opponents on top of him. The Albion, however, worked hard, and bit by bit got into the Gloucester half. Here Percy Stout brought off a fine run down the touch-line, which gave the visitors a good deal of anxiety. Bursting away from a scrum, the Albion front rank looked dangerous, but Frank Stout checked their career with a flying kick into touch.

The home team, aided by smart work by Stephens and Cummings, took up the aggressive, and a subsequent strong combined movement nearly ended in disaster for the Albion. Gloucester still attacked strongly, but they could not get over the line. For picking out of a scrum, the visiting halves were penalised in a favourable position, but Percy Stout's kick for goal went wide, a minor only being registered.

Off the drop out Watkins made his mark, and Percy had another shot for goal, from near the centre, but a grand attempt again went wide of the posts. Woodhouse ran out instead of touching down, but he only landed the ball into touch at the quarter flag.

From this point the Albion came away in good style, and they crossed the centre flag before being stopped. Ensuing play was chiefly confined to the forwards, but neither side could claim much advantage.

At length, however, the Devonport representatives assumed the upper hand, and Smith being tackled with the ball under the Gloucester goal, the visitors looked very dangerous. From the scrum which followed Car Cummings secured and after a short run essayed a pass – a risky thing to do in his own 25. Taylor failed to take the ball and it dropped to the ground, but Stephens was at hand and kicked down the field. Foster made his mark and the ball was placed for Spires, but the ex-Gloucesterian failed to cover the crossbar.

On the re-start, Gloucester took play to the Albion half, where Percy Stout, taking a sharp pass from Taylor, ran down the field at a good rate. He was, however, well tackled by Gloyns, and his pass back being taken by an Albion player, the latter found touch at mid-field. The visitors now played a sterling game, and their forwards heeling out Jones and Duffin gave their three-quarters plenty to do. Vivyan and then Foster made exceptionally strong runs, and it looked as if the home defence would be penetrated. The tackling, however, was too good.

Urged on by the shouts of their supporters the Gloucester forwards brought off a superb rush half the length of the ground, but Gloyns saved pluckily. Then Duffin, making away from a scrimmage, kicked down to the home half, and play hovered in this vicinity for some few minutes. The Albion made one or two big efforts to score, but the defence of the home men was very sound. A mistake by Smith looked like letting the visitors in space, but the home men managed to prevent the disaster. The game continued to go slightly in favour of the Albion, and from a fruitless drop at goal by Woodhouse, Gloucester touched down.

The end was fast drawing near, but before the close a regrettable incident occurred. C. Williams and Berry were seen on the ground together, and though it was impossible to see from the Press box what actually happened, the referee ordered both men off the field.

On the resumption the Albion made one last effort to change the result, but all to no purpose, and "no side" was whistled with the game in the Gloucester half.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 try (3 points)
Devon Albion Nil

REMARKS

Gloucester achieved their great ambition to-day, and though victory was only secured by the smallest possible margin, it was sufficient for the purpose. Without being a great game to watch, the contest contained plenty of exciting incidents, in which both teams were equally prominent.

The Albion [word/words unreadable] in such real earnest that it looked as if the game was going to be won in the first few minutes, but after the home men had recovered from the fright they received in the opening stages they gave their opponents plenty to go on with.

The try secured by Taylor, which eventually proved the only point registered in the course of the match, was the result of an exceptionally clever movement, in which Stephens took a conspicuous part. The manner in which the Gloucester half-back tricked his opponents was a real treat, and reminded one of Stephens at his very best.

The Albion came with a big reputation, and to say they fully sustained it is not saying too much on their behalf. Their forwards proved themselves an exceedingly smart set, and were very clever indeed in getting the ball in the scrum. At one period the Gloucester pack heeled out nicely, but taking the game as a whole, the visitors had possession more often than the home forwards. In actual scrimmage work both packs played for all they were worth, and there was no distinct advantage to either side in the loose.

For the Albion, Spires, Sowden, Berry, and Sims were the more distinguished for individual efforts, though the ex-Gloucestrian was too closely watched in the lines-out to get dangerous. Of the home forwards every man did well, and there was no player more conspicuous than another. The eight attacked closely, and followed the ball very keenly.

Of the rival back divisions combination was not of a very high-class character. With the advantage of playing behind the cleverer pack of forwards, Jones and Duffin were more conspicuous in initiating attacking movements than the Gloucester pair. Jones was very nippy when standing close to the scrum, and the ex-Welsh player should prove a valuable acquisition to the Albion club.

Stephens and Cummings were a vast improvement on Lansley and Hall, and both did a lot of effective work. At times Stephens showed flashes of his old brilliance; whilst Cummings often got his side out of a tight corner. Vivyan, Woodhouse, and Foster performed with great credit in the Albion three-quarter line, and each player made one or two powerful runs.

Taylor and Percy Stout in the centre for Gloucester took a lot of looking after. Stout did some splendid kicking, and tackled and saved in his usual style. Clutterbuck performed capitally on the wing, and was streets ahead of Smith. Hipwood and Gloyns both did admirable service by their respective sides at full-back.

The gate amounted to £53.