

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1898

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. ROCKCLIFF

These teams met at Kingsholm yesterday in summer-like weather, and before a large crowd of spectators. The visitors, who won the Northumberland county cup last Saturday for the eighth time in nine years, came with a big reputation, and were expected to severely test the abilities of the home men. Both clubs were well represented, though E. W. Taylor, the veteran English International half-back, was unable to assist the visitors, and Hipwood and Luce were absent from the home side.

The teams were as follow : –

Gloucester. – G. Romans, back; W. H. Taylor (captain), Percy Stout, G. F. Clutterbuck, and W. Dovey, three-quarter backs; Car Cummings and A. Stephens, half-backs; C. Williams, C. Rose, C. Hall, F. M. Stout, F. Goulding, A. H. Click, Lewis Watkins, and G. Smith, forwards.

Rockcliff. – P. Moran, back; W. Taylor, S. Anderson, W. Straughan, and E. W. Elliott, three-quarter backs; T. Owen and G. Cookson, half-backs; J. H. Greenwell, F. Bell, J. Dobinson, T. Finlay, R. M. Robertson, B. Taylor, J. Nesbit, and G. R. Gibson, forwards.

Referee : Mr. W. Bowen.

Rockcliff won the toss, and Hall started for the home team against the breeze and sun. The opening stages were greatly in favour of the visitors, their forwards and backs exhibiting some clever work; whilst Cookson, with a smart individual effort, carried play in close proximity to the home goal.

The City team worked out of danger, but from a penalty Anderson drew first blood – a minor. Following the drop-out the Gloucester forwards brought off a fine rush, but Moran effected a wonderful save under great pressure.

Mid-field was now the scene of operations for several minutes, but at length Clutterbuck got off with a good dribble, but he was whistled back. Gloucester, however, got the advantage a little later, Frank Stout heading a fine rush into the Northerners' 25. Cookson again came to the rescue of his side, but Romans stopped his career nicely, and Rose, following up a kick, pushed Moran into touch inside Rockcliff's quarter. Here Walter Taylor received a wide pass, but though the Gloucester captain made a good effort to score he was pushed into touch outside the goal-line.

The visitors obtained several penalties for infringements by the Gloucester players, and by the kicks kept the game well at the centre. Breaking away from a line-out the City forwards looked to have a nice opening, but Cummings passed forward when getting clear. A similar mistake spoiled another pretty movement a minute later. Percy Stout and Taylor were prominent with clever punts, but Rockcliff gained a lot of ground with the aid of a free.

Clutterbuck getting a return charged down almost in front of goal, the visitors had a splendid chance of scoring, but a knock on almost on the line lost the opportunity. Rockcliff attacked desperately for the next few minutes, and Gloucester were certainly lucky in keeping their lines intact. The home defence, however, was penetrated shortly afterwards, Elliott going over with a corner try after a bout of passing. The place-kick failed.

On the re-start Stephens was early conspicuous with a couple of fine bursts, and Frank Stout, Hall, and Taylor combining in a dribble a score seemed imminent, but Moran saved at the critical moment. Gloucester were just now playing a fine game, and had considerably the better of the play.

A series of exchanges amongst the home backs gave Dovey a chance on the left wing, but his pass back inside was lost. Cookson eased the pressure a little with a really clever dribble, but Romans snatched the ball from his feet, and got in a capital punt to the Rockcliff 25.

A nice bout of passing and inter-passing by the visiting three-quarters was heartily applauded, but the movement was stopped at the centre flag. At this point a long throw-out sent the ball to Taylor, the home captain, who fielded nicely and went off at a tremendous pace. Several opponents essayed to check his career, but their efforts were fruitless, and Taylor finished up a fine effort by scoring behind the posts amidst great enthusiasm. Percy Stout easily goaled. Immediately afterwards half time was called, Gloucester leading by two points.

The resumption saw Gloucester with a nice breeze at their backs, and the home men at once set to work. The visitors, however, were not to be caught napping, the whole team working well together. Fielding a punt from an opponent, Dovey dodged several men very cleverly, and eventually passed to P. Stout, who sent on to Clutterbuck. The latter punted high to Moran, who fumbled, and he was immediately floored by several Gloucester players. The visiting custodian, however, managed to wriggle with the ball until two or three of his colleagues came up, and thus prevented a certain score.

By strong forward play Rockcliff reached the centre, where Cookson further improved his side's position with useful kicks. The Rockcliff half got his knickers torn in trying to get away from Stephens' clutches, and a stoppage took place whilst he effected a change.

On resuming Percy Stout got in a grand kick to the visitors' 25, but Rockcliff relieved slightly. From a scrum, Stephens got hold and passed to Cummings, who threw out to Taylor. The latter took the ball beautifully, and with a brilliant sprint went over in the corner with a very fine try. Percy Stout failed to convert from the difficult angle.

On the drop-out Rockcliff showed up with some clever play, and forced Gloucester to defend. Elliott had a drop for goal, but the attempt was a poor one. The visitors, however, had the best of the succeeding play, and Anderson made a good attempt to land a penalty goal, the wind taking the ball outside the posts.

Percy Stout dropped out with a magnificent kick, which bounced into touch from the field of play well inside the visitors' 25. From the line-out Goulding broke away finely, but his pass went astray. After this Romans was called upon several times, but the Gloucester custodian was never at fault.

The Rockcliff forwards now went in for pushing, and they gradually forced the home men on their line. For some little time Gloucester were severely pressed, but they succeeded in keeping their opponents out.

A foolish mistake by Cummings, however, gave the visitors a chance, which they quickly took advantage of. The Gloucester half fielded the ball from a shot at goal by Anderson, and, being collared after hesitating what to do, he passed the ball back over his own goal-line. Frank Stout apparently touched the ball down, but a visitor rushed up and fell on the ball, and the referee awarded a try. Anderson took the shot at goal from a favourable position. and with a neat kick sent the ball over the cross-bar. This placed the teams on equal terms.

On the re-start Walter Taylor very soon got an opening, the ball being sent to him by Percy Stout out of some loose play. The Gloucester captain raced hard, but finding he was hampered he punted towards the goal to give his forwards a chance. The ball, however, went dead, and only a touch-down resulted. This was the last point of interest, for soon afterwards the whistle sounded "no-side."

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal, 1 try (8 points)
Rockcliff 1 goal, 1 try (8 points)