

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1936

DEVONPORT SERVICES BEATEN

FROM "W.B.'S NOTEBOOK

Gloucester's victory over the strong Devonport Services team was a capital wind-up of the holiday matches. The Kingsholm playing pitch was in surprisingly good condition after the heavy rain following the rapid thaw, and the fast, open football displayed was thoroughly enjoyed. Gloucester were clearly the better team all-round, and only the magnificent defence of the Services in the last quarter averted a far heavier defeat than 9 pts. to 3.

It was a rare tussle between the forwards in the loose, first one side and then the other gaining the advantage, but the City pack greatly excelled in the scrums, especially in the concluding stages, where Carpenter was at his best in controlling the ball.

The two Internationals – Forrest and Evans – were splendid workers for the Services in all phases, and Watkins, Doggett and Maycock shared honours in some rousing loose rushes. But Gloucester had their equals in Welshman, Morris, A'Bear and Price, the former's dribbling being a feature, while Price shone with two lovely tackles, which probably prevented a score on each occasion.

Dick again displayed his ability in the open, and he had a big share in two of Gloucester's tries. A clever feint to pass enabled him to secure an opening for Edwards, which the latter utilised, and later, from an interception, he put Ken Smith in possession for a second score.

Intelligent anticipation is one of Dick's chief attributes, and further, he can give and take a pass.

GLOUCESTER HALF-BACKS

In this match Day gained more good marks. He was opposed to a worrier in Welch, and had to contend with marked attention from Watkins (the Somerset and England trial wing forward), but his service to Meadows was rarely spoiled, and the vice-captain generally had plenty of room to manoeuvre.

The Gloucester pair are working up a nice understanding, and their effective combination is having very satisfactory results. Meadows again opened up the play cleverly, and beautiful movements followed, but some of the best went unrewarded. One instance was when Bown knocked on right on the line after Brooks had made a perfect opening.

The Gloucester backs, finding they could not break through the defence, tried drops at goal – Meadows, Brooks and Hook all had shots – but neither were successful.

CLEAR ADVANTAGE

As a combined unit the City had a clear advantage behind the scrum and the work as a whole, considering the heavy conditions, was highly commendable.

Close and deadly marking assisted the Services appreciably, but there were a few occasions when the least bit of luck would have given Gloucester tries.

Brooks and Bown, on the right, shone in some capital moves, the captain displaying a good deal of his old thrust. Bown had the dash, if not the speed, and his try was the result of a spirited effort for the corner.

Edwards and Hook also worked nicely together, and inter-passing only just failed to evade the defenders on two occasions. Hook, however, could not clear Hurden, the Devon sprinter, in a straight run, though he tried his hardest.

HURDEN AND KNAPMAN

Hurden was easily the most dangerous of the Services backs in attack, and he brought off several fine runs. A player with the speed, dash and ability of the Services right wing would make the Gloucester line complete. Bailey, the Somerset county player, was very aggressive among the Devonport backs, but the support accorded him was only moderate. Criddle's best efforts were in defence, but the one man who stood out for the visitors was Knapman at full-back.

The veteran has enjoyed another successful season in point-gathering but it is his wonderful all-round work that attracts attention. Always cool under the severest pressure, Knapman made only one mistake in fielding, and his well-judged punting aided his side again and again. Twice, however, he essayed flying kicks – always risky – but they came off.

Roy James was equally sound in the position for Gloucester, and the City club are fortunate in having such a player ready and willing to serve in an emergency.