

THE CITIZEN

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FROM W.B.'S NOTEBOOK

GIFT TRIES FOR HARLEQUINS AT TWICKENHAM

HOOK'S FINE FORM PLEASES CRITICS

The City's defeat at Twickenham spoiled a splendid record against London clubs. In the previous nine engagements with the leading Metropolitan combinations, the solitary reverse was against the Old Blues, who beat a weakened side at Kingsholm, on a county match date, by 11 pts. to 7.

The other eight engagements were all won, several by substantial margins.

In the ten fixtures an aggregate of 152 points were recorded against 76 by opponents, so that on the season's results Gloucester can claim a decisive advantage.

Here are the individual results in fixtures with London opponents :

v. Old Cranleighans . . .	W	11	10
v. Guy's Hospital	W	40	11
v. Richmond	W	9	3
v. Old Blues	L	7	11
v. Blackheath	W	14	0
v. O.M.T.'s	W	13	6
v. London Scottish	W	29	13
v. Guy's Hospital	W	8	6
v. London Welsh	W	15	0
v. Harlequins	L	<u>6</u>	<u>16</u>
		152	76

Two gift tries were credited to the Harlequins in the last ten minutes of the game gave an exaggerated view of the Londoners' superiority at Twickenham.

Just previously Gloucester were fighting desperately for the lead, and there were three distinct occasions when with a bit of luck tries might have been gained by the City. The only reward, however, was a second penalty goal by Parker, and this left the visitors still two points in arrears.

The Harlequins, having successfully withstood the Gloucester battering, suddenly swarmed to the attack, and a curious try came their way.

Parker, when over his own goal-line, attempted to punt out, but failed to lift the ball sufficiently. It struck a player and bounced into the hands of Golding, who had only to put the ball down to score.

It was one of the softest tries imaginable, and settled the issue. But further disaster befel the City before the end, and Parker was again at fault. A kick ahead by the Harlequins was keenly followed up, and the Gloucester custodian attempted to fly-kick straight to touch. But the ball did not reach the touch line, and Butler fielding on the run had an unopposed run behind the posts.

Thus in a few minutes the Londoners had doubled their score – against the run of play in the final twenty minutes.

HARLEQUINS' OPPORTUNISM

Harlequins' opportunism was emphasised in this match, and there was no question they were the better team on the day's play. Their forwards were faster from the scrums, and displayed far more aggressive tactics when in possession of the ball. In comparison, Gloucester's open work suffered, and even in loose dribbling the visitors did not reach that effectiveness which has been such a pronounced feature of their work this season.

In the scrummages honours were fairly divided, Gregory, the former Bristol, Somerset and England forward, holding his own with Carpenter.

Individually John A'Bear was the dominant force in the Gloucester pack, and his work in the line-out was particularly good. His best supports were Harris, Smith and Morris.

Hordern was playing his last match in London, and it was fitting that he should make his farewell on the famous enclosure. The international has taken up aviation, and is qualifying for his pilot's certificate. His future appearances on the football field will be as a referee.

Gloucester were handicapped in having Barrow twice injured and off the field for practically half the game.

HOOK'S BRILLIANT EFFORTS

The combined back play on both sides did not reveal any striking results, due largely to the close marking of the rival players.

Day and Meadows made a satisfactory combination at half-back and with Phillips and Edwards in their usual places in the centre, and at their best, Gloucester would probably have made better use of their opportunities.

J. C. Brooks was responsible for one or two strong bursts, but the aggressive movements as a rule were too mechanical, and did not suggest scoring ability.

Hook was easily the outstanding three-quarter in the side, and on the field, and the City and county wing greatly impressed the Press critics. Hook had to make his own chances, and one magnificent run, in which he displayed speed and dodging ability, furnished the finest individual effort of the match. He also kept a close watch on the international Butler and all-round was the star player in the back division.

Meadows and Hook exploited the "scissors" movement on several occasions, and twice the wing man was sent clear beautifully. From my angle in the Press seats the pass to Hook appeared all right in each instance, but the referee, on the spot, promptly ruled for "forward transfer," and clever combination went for nought. Gloucester certainly did not get their share of luck in this game.

MORE DANGEROUS LINE

The Harlequins' best try was credited to Nicholson, a strong running centre, who had figured in an English trial this season. He showed smart tactics in coming outside Butler after the wing had progressed with a useful run, and this move deceived the defence. Nicholson was able to race up to Parker unchecked, and punting ahead he was able to get up to gather the ball on the bounce and score in the corner. Crichton, the other inside man for the Harlequins, was mainly noticeable for his sound tackling, and Napper was also effective in this respect. As a line, the Harlequins appeared the more dangerous, but the handling at times was ill-judged.

SMART OUTSIDE HALF

Watts, who figured at outside half for the Londoners, had previously appeared twice against Gloucester – for Oxford Greyhounds at Kingsholm, and also for the University at Oxford. The good impression he created in both these matches were confirmed, and he should be a strong candidate for his Blue next season. Watts made few errors in handling and showed commendable initiative in opening up the play for his three-quarters. His kicking, too, was very helpful.

UNFORTUNATE SLIPS

Those two unfortunate slips in the closing minutes of the game marred Parker's display at full-back. Up till then the Old Cryptian had performed remarkably well, kicking a fine length, collecting Gloucester's six points with two penalty goals, and only narrowly missing a third.

On the other side, M. J. Brooks, a younger brother of the former Gloucester and county captain, shaped confidently, and gave a creditable all-round display.

With three internationals in their ranks, the Harlequins were strongly represented forward. Bolton, Thompson and Mycock were a fast and clever trio in the open, and Prescott a hard worker in all phases of forward play. It was a hard battle between the rival packs, with the Harlequins the more enterprising in attack, the backing up and positioning being excellent.

JC