

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1938

GLOUCESTER 17 Pts., DEVONPORT SERVICES 4 Pts.

WEAKENED SERVICES' TEAM PUT UP PLUCKY FIGHT

GLOUCESTER FORWARDS NOT UP TO FORM

HOOK'S THREE TRIES

SPECIAL BY "W.B."

Gloucester maintained their unbeaten record at home against English teams to-day, when they defeated Devonport Services, who have had a very moderate season from a results point of view. This was the Services' 15th reverse in 25 engagements.

Both teams had prominent absentees, the Services having six players engaged for the Royal Navy against the Harlequins at Portsmouth, and two others away.

The visitors called largely on the 2nd Gloucester Regiment (who have qualified for the final of the Army Cup) for reserves, no fewer than six members being included (Mackenzie, Power, Hardy, Dainty, Boon and Kingscote). Dainty is a former Tredworth player, and Kingscote played for Atlas. Another local player was Spiers, who also appeared for Atlas.

Gloucester fielded short of Boughton and Tanner (both on the injured list with muscle trouble in the thigh), Phillips and Gough. The latter was in the selected team, but had to stand down as the result of a cut over the eye sustained in the match with Bath. Stephens deputised at full-back. Dibden took the vacancy at centre, and Day was recalled to partner Meadows at half-back.

GLOUCESTER

FULL-BACK: T. Stephens.

THREE-QUARTERS: R. E. Hook, C. J. Dibden, E. V. Manning, and R. E. Early.

HALF-BACKS: D. Meadows and E. R. Day.

FORWARDS: T. Price, A. Carpenter, C. Harris, J. G. A'Bear, R. Morris, Dr. Dick, E. Bayliss, and H. M. Hughes.

DEVONPORT SERVICES

FULL-BACK: Pte. Power.

THREE-QUARTERS: Pte. Hardy, Lieut. Mackenzie, L.-Writer Dunbar, P. O. Criddle (capt.).

HALF-BACKS: Writer Bettinson and Pte. Dainty.

FORWARDS: A. B. Bevan, E. R. A. Spiers, Mid. Taylor, Pte. Boon, Pte. Farmer, L/Corpl. Kingscote, Lieut. Casement, and Segt. Kelly.

REFEREE: Mr. F. Gilbert (Midland Counties).

THE GAME

There was a heavy storm of rain just before the kick off, and the large majority of spectators, about 3,000, were under cover.

After a quiet opening Gloucester broke away through Early, who punted across. Power's kick was charged down, and the ball rebounded to the right wing, but Early just failed to keep it out of touch. From the next scrum Day opened out to Manning, who cut through beautifully at a splendid pace. He ran to the left, where he served HOOK with a perfect pass to score an easy try. Stephens failed to convert.

The Services restarted with vigour, and helped with good touch kicks by Bettinson and Mackenzie gained a position in the home 25. Mistakes by the City backs allowed the visitors to get close and Criddle took a drop for goal. The ball, however, went wide and over the line. Hook fielded, and after a 30 yards dash he punted to touch at the centre. From this point the Gloucester forwards, headed by Harris, broke away. Power was beaten and Hughes dribbling on took the ball over the line between the posts and apparently scored, but the referee ruled for a touch-down.

HOOK'S SECOND TRY

The Services' were playing a strong game in the loose and worried the home men at times. In the open the City were seen to advantage and Manning was to the fore with another dashing run, but Dibden's pass to Hook was forward.

The Services' came into prominence with two or three smart bits of work, but the finishing was not good. Gloucester pressed back, and from a breakaway down touch by Day, HOOK was served, and sprinting hard the left wing ran over behind the posts. The same player added the goal points.

AND A THIRD

On the restart keen following up and sound tackling by the Services gave them a fair share of the play, but the attacks were not good enough.

Hook came to the rescue of the home team when danger threatened with a run and punt, and the game was transferred to the other end.

The Gloucester backs continued well up to a point, but Dibden did not judge his transfers any too well. A fine burst by Hughes nearly carried him clear, and Gloucester attacked strongly.

A loose rush by the visitors changed their position, but clever combination by the City backs put them on the aggressive again.

A strong run by Manning placed Early in possession, and the latter made progress, but his inside pass was not accepted. A'Bear later picked up and tried to cross, but he was held up.

From the ensuing scrum Day fed Meadows, and the latter, with excellent judgment, threw out a wide transfer to HOOK. The latter gathered cleanly, and sprinting past Hardy scored his third try. Hook failed at goal.

DROP GOAL FOR THE SERVICES

The game on the restart favoured Gloucester, whose backs were too speedy for the Services. The latter, however, stuck pluckily to their opponents and continued to tackle well.

At the centre there was a breakdown in the passing at Manning, and the visitors dribbled away.

There were further failures to pick up, and Hook was eventually collared in possession in front of the posts. The ball came back from the Services' forwards to BETTINSON, who dropped a smart goal; this success for the Services being heartily cheered.

Play on the resumption was fairly even with the Services putting in strong forward work. The backs, too, were not afraid to open out, and on occasions they handled very smartly. In the danger zone, however, the City covered very closely, and timely touch-finders gained relief.

Half-time :

Gloucester 1 goal 2 tries

Services 1 goal (d.)

Gloucester started the second half with a strong attack, following a good run by Dibden, but Hook was forced over the touchline. A kick down was well followed up, and Casement and Kelly carried on to the home 25.

The Services, securing the ball from successive scrums, tried hard to beat the defence, but were unsuccessful. A loose forward rush by the City changed the position, and A'Bear, Carpenter and Price severely tested Power.

A PERFECT TRY

The latter, however, proved equal to the occasion. The Services worked out of danger and mid-field was the scene of operations.

Here Meadows was sent away by Day, who made a delightful opening and passed to MANNING. The latter shot away, and deceiving the opposition with a perfect "dummy," went over unopposed with a lovely try. Stephens this time missed the goal points.

Gloucester now led by 14 pts. to 4, but the City, with the chances afforded, should have been further ahead. The Services resumed with a nice passing movement, but a reverse transfer went astray. Next Hughes was conspicuous with a 30 yards' run up to the full-back, but his pass to Early was intercepted and the movement checked.

SERVICES' SMART WORK

The Services' line was threatened, but they cleared successfully, and in turn took up the attack. Clever handling and a splendid dash by Mackenzie looked promising, but Dainty, to whom he handed, fell to a smothering tackle. The visitors were putting plenty of life into their play, and were quicker in their movements than the home players. Gloucester several times tried handling, but the passing was too slow, and generally ended in a knock-on. On the other side the Services moved ahead with more determination and only close tackling saved the situation.

A CLEVER SCORE

The next few minutes' play was evenly contested at mid-field, but eventually the Services' began to obtain the upper hand in the scrums. Dainty gave out a good service, but though trying very hard the visitors could not break through. Then came a sudden change. Meadows, fielding in the loose, cut round on the left side and fed Hook.

The latter was hemmed in, but he cross-kicked with good judgment, and BAYLISS being well up and outside, fielded the ball on the bounce and dashed over with a good try. Hook's shot for goal went just outside the upright.

Although 13 points down, the Services re-started with splendid dash. The backs shone in a series of exchanges and Mackenzie looked dangerous. There was a final kick over the Gloucester line, but Early came across from the left and touched down – a fortunate save.

Gloucester had to fight hard to hold their own in subsequent play, which was rather scrambling at times. Early again saved from a dangerous dribble by the visitors.

The Services more than held their own in later play, the work of the home team being very ragged at times. At the end the City were being heavily pressed.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 1 gl. 4 tries (17 pts.)

SERVICES 1 goal (d) (4 pts.)