

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHRONICLE

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FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER'S VALUABLE "FIND"

AN UNUSUAL INCIDENT AT KINGSHOLM

Those who witnessed the game between Gloucester and the Harlequins on Saturday must have departed sadly disappointed with the match. In the first place, the play did not reach the customary high standard that the Harlequins are wont to serve up at Kingsholm; secondly, the home three-quarters' lamentable weakness as a combined line; thirdly, the general tactics employed by some of the visitors, which incensed the spectators to such an extent that a most rare incident at Kingsholm occurred inasmuch as the referee (being appealed to by the Harlequins linesman), stopped the game for a few moments, and accompanied by Ayliffe and Sid Brown (who appealed to the spectators' better instincts), warned the offenders that a repetition of the "barracking" tactics would result in the game being stopped.

It was, of course, most regrettable. The Kingsholm spectators, generally speaking, are a sporting crowd, and invariably generous in their appreciation of clever play by opposing teams. Whilst I do not for a moment condone the action of a section of the spectators on Saturday, yet I must confess that the unusual tactics employed by some of the Harlequins players near the old stand, such as fisticuffs on the ground, pushing in the back in the line-out and several cases of tackling Gloucester players without the ball not unnaturally nettled the home supporters. It was truly unworthy of such a side as the Harlequins. Hitherto their play has been above reproach, but if the display given on Saturday is any criterion, then there is a great deal on Newport's side of the now famous cancellation of fixtures case.

Gloucester took the field without Voyce and Taylor, whilst the Harlequins had Wickes and Wakefield away. The game in the early stages was mainly confined to the forwards, with occasional flashes of back play by the Harlequins, but there was an entire absence of the brilliant handling which made the London side so popular at Gloucester. Their pace, however, was far too great for the City, and Gibbs left the defence standing whenever he dashed for the line. The visitors won by 14 points to 10. Personally I think they were extremely lucky in so doing, as Gloucester should have scored on two or three occasions.

Saxby simply threw chances away galore by either muffing his passes or by indulging in ridiculous punts. He is clearly out of his element in the Gloucester three-quarter line.

Millington more than justified my opinion showed[sic] himself the only "class" player in the back division. Indeed, he behind the scrum[sic] for Gloucester, though Sid Brown's cut through and swerve that gained him his try was most praiseworthy. Unfortunately, the popular sub-captain received a bad cut on the forehead, which visibly handicapped him for the remainder of the game.

The undoubted "discovery" for Gloucester was McIlwaine, the young Cambridge forward. He was without question the best forward on the field in the loose, but I suggest he is in the wrong position. Gloucester are in need of a good centre and wing three-quarters. My suggested back division is as follows : – Williams; Taylor and Milliner; Brown, Millington, Hughes, and McIlwaine. With this side, I feel convinced there would be a transformation of Gloucester's back play. Thompson is plucky, but I think a few games with the Seconds would be most beneficial in "bringing him out."

Ayliffe played his usual inspiring game, always leading his men, whilst Hemmings and Triggs-Herbert were very prominent in loose play. Hemmings did not shine as a substitute for Sid Brown in the threequarter line, and it was a pity McIlwaine was not tried instead.

An exceptional feast of sport is to be served up at Kingsholm during the Yuletide. To-day (Thursday) Abertillery will appear as the visitors; on Boxing Day the Old Merchant Taylors will be met; whilst on Monday next the postponed County match between Somerset and Gloucestershire will be staged. Somerset have selected a powerful side, and Gloucestershire will need to be on top form to defeat the Cider County.

JC