

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1926

FOOTBALL

LYDNEY TEST GLO'STER AT KINGSHOLM

VISITORS BEATEN BY A PENALTY GOAL

CITY'S BRILLIANT TRY

The season was opened at Kingsholm to-day when Lydney again provided the opposition for the first test. Compared with last year, there were numerous changes in the personnel of the Gloucester team, the only players who figured in the side which defeated Lydney last September by 28 points to 6 being Voyce, Loveridge, Millington, Hughes, Short and Hemming.

Both Clubs had enjoyed a preliminary run, Lydney suffering a surprising defeat from Berry Hill last Saturday; whilst Gloucester could only claim a narrow victory over Stroud in a mid-week evening fixture on Thursday.

In the absence of any rain for some weeks, the Kingsholm ground was very hard, but fortunately the weather conditions, though still far too warm for football, were nothing like so sultry as on the previous afternoon, when the thermometer reached 81 degrees in the shade.

The following were the teams : —

GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. Thomas.

THREE-QUARTERS : R. N. Loveridge, E. H. Hughes, Roy James, and S. R. Crowther.

HALF-BACKS : J. Howell and T. Millington.

FORWARDS : A. T. Voyce (capt.), M. Short, J. Hemming, G. Foulkes, G. P. Pennington, H. Pitt, G. McIlwaine, and A. Rea.

LYDNEY

BACK : Joe Davies.

THREE-QUARTERS : E. Pritchard, W. Probert, L. Lane, and P. C. Hyam.

HALF-BACKS : T. Wellington and Ray Probert (capt.).

FORWARDS : P. C. Taylor, P. C. Morris, F. Fletcher, H. Read, J. Willis, P. Price, T. Edmunds, and W. Waite.

Referee : Mr. F. G. Stephens (Midland Counties).

THE GAME

Gloucester, who fielded short of Thompson, Triggs-Herbert, and Milliner, all on the injured list, gave a trial to J. Howell, who has assisted London Welsh and is a son of Dr. G. P. Howell, of Cheltenham. Lydney missed the valuable services of Kerwood and Biddle in the back division. There was a fair attendance when the teams took the field, the visitors bringing up a goodly contingent of supporters.

The toss favoured Gloucester, and Morris started for the visitors from the Worcester-street goal with a poor kick. Hyam was early prominent with a short run and punt across for Lydney, and later R. Probert led a dribble, which took play to the home half. Here James ran round, recovered, and sent to touch.

Lydney being penalised near the centre, Voyce took a short punt and started a round of passing. The ball went through several pairs of hands, but was finally fumbled and the visitors relieved. Gloucester made headway with a penalty, but Lydney came back with a loose rush to beyond half-way.

From the loose Howell gathered cleverly and broke through beautifully and passed to Hemming, but the latter hung on too long, and being partially tackled his pass went astray. Palpable off-side by a Lydney forward gave the City another penalty, and with a fine kick MILLINGTON landed a goal amidst hearty cheering, five minutes after the start.

Bustling forward play on the resumption gave Lydney the advantage territorially, but the game lacked incident. Lydney heeling, Wellington fed R. Probert between his legs, but the latter missed, and though recovering was only able to get in a little punt to touch. Give and take play followed, until Gloucester broke away, Millington aiding with a couple of useful kicks. It was keen, hard Rugby, but there was little in the way of combined movements witnessed.

Millington at length came into prominence with a smart break through and pass, but Crowther, the last to receive, was collared by Hyam, who robbed his opponent of the ball. He was, however, immediately tackled and brought down.

Some keen rushes by the Lydney forwards gained for them a good slice of ground, but Gloucester worked back, and in a rough and tumble on the ground a Lydney forward was warned by the referee. Voyce, with big punts from penalties, gave Gloucester the advantage, but the City backs could not get much of the ball. There was one possible opening, but James knocked on.

Thomas stopped a dangerous rush by the Lydney forwards, picking up and dashing through in capital style. Pennington and Loveridge did good work on the right wing, and Davies was hard pressed over his line from a long punt. He luckily got the ball away to touch a few yards outside. Lydney had another narrow escape a little later, Davies saving pluckily against numbers.

Working well together Gloucester rushed right to the line, where Howell attempted to break through but succumbed to a smothering tackle. Gloucester heeled and the ball was got out to Millington, but the latter's pass was intercepted by Hyam, who had a clear field with the exception of Thomas. The Lydney wing ran hard, but Crowther coming across forced him to kick, and Loveridge made his mark. Gloucester returned to the attack, Hemming dribbling finely, but Lydney, with dashing footwork, quickly came back. The Gloucester defence was tested, and Wellington gathering was nearly over.

From a scrum close in Lydney had a fine chance but a forward picked up off-side and was penalised, Gloucester gaining much-needed relief. From the drop-out the Lydney forwards, who were playing with great dash swept down the field, Crowther effecting a nice save. Again Lydney spoilt an all-round effort by infringing the rules, Millington gaining some 30 yards by the resultant kick.

The next few minutes was all forward, desperately keen, but with little skill or resource exhibited. Gloucester benefited as the result of another penalty, but in actual play Lydney were more than holding their own.

At length Gloucester came out with a brilliant movement, which ended in a glorious try by VOYCE. The opening was started by Howell at the centre, and the ball went to Crowther, who dashed ahead and passed inside. With the forwards well in line the handling was perfectly carried out, Voyce, the last man to receive, scoring easily. Millington failed at goal.

HALF-TIME :

GLOUCESTER 1 goal (p) 1 try
LYDNEY Nil

Lydney, on the whole, had had the best of the forward play, but they failed to make much use of their backs. Gloucester resumed, and Howell early came into prominence with an effective tackle of Ray Probert. The ball getting loose W. Probert punted hard and found touch near the home goal line. But another penalty against the visitors lost them the ground gained. Another long kick down was followed up by Hyam, who tackled Thomas and pushed him to touch.

Lydney pressed hard now, and in one desperate burst looked certain scorers, but the ball was fumbled. Short punts brought relief for Gloucester, till Lydney worked back and the City experienced great difficulty in warding off the pressure.

From a short pass Millington broke away and fed Voyce, who threw out wide to Loveridge. The vice-captain ran splendidly, and shook off one or two opponents, but was eventually brought down. Lydney rushed back and a loose kick went to Thomas, but the latter's punt was charged down and three Lydney forwards had the line at their mercy. The ball was over-run and it looked as if they would miss the try after all, but EDMUNDS dashed up and made the score. Hyam failed with the goal-kick.

Gloucester restarted, and there was an attempt to open out, but Crowther was held by Hyam and Lane. Lydney dribbled some 20 yards to beyond the centre where play operated for a few minutes. Millington at length moved off and fed James, but the centre dropped the ball. Fortunately Crowther was handy, and picking up dashed through and passed to Voyce, who, however, could not make much headway.

The work continued mainly forward with Lydney the stronger set in the heavy exchanges. A pass from Howell to Millington going astray Wellington nipped in and punted ahead but James brought off a clever relief kick to touch. From well inside the home half McIlwaine secured and brought off a sharp dash. His transfer was given all right, but the next pass, rather wide, missed Loveridge altogether, and the movement came to an end.

There was a brief delay owing to Wellington, the Lydney scrum-half, being laid out, but he was soon able to resume. Midfield play followed, but keenness was its only recommendation. Morris sustained a damaged ankle soon afterwards, but continued.

Mistakes by the City led to a sharp attack by the visitors, who had a chance of adding to their score from a mis-kick over the line. There was a scramble for possession, and out of it the referee ordered a scrum five yards out. From this point McIlwaine gathered and brought off a fine dashing run, but it ended at the centre. Still, the effort brought relief to the City when it was greatly needed. From the ensuing scrum Gloucester opened out, and Crowther was sent away, only to fall to a tackle by the watchful Hyam.

A penalty against Gloucester saw a big punt put in, and the bounce beating Voyce, the ball was taken by James, who dodged a couple of opponents and passed to Millington, who put in a big kick to the right. Loveridge and two others raced hard for possession, but Pritchard secured, though he was immediately tackled.

Gloucester brought off a nice bout of passing, James cutting up nicely and feeding Crowther, but the defence was too strong. Just before the end Lydney were awarded a penalty, and Hyam essayed a long-distance shot at goal, but with no success, and the end came with no addition to the scoring.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 1 goal (p) 1 try (6 pts.)
LYDNEY 1 try (3 pts.)

REMARKS

Gloucester had very little to spare this afternoon in a game contested with great keenness despite the hardness of the ground, but lacking in real spectacular movements. The one exception was Gloucester's try, and this effort, initiated and carried through with perfect accord, made one feel that the rival players were capable of doing things if only they had made the attempt.

For the most part play was with the forwards, and here Lydney, a strong, dashing pack, were superior in those bustling tactics which enabled them to beat the City men in the loose, and harass the backs no end. In the scrums, too, the visitors held the advantage in gaining possession, and with the ball coming out so often to Wellington, Lydney might well have given their back division an opportunity of showing their skill and resource in combination.

But either through lack of confidence or unwillingness to risk anything, Lydney did practically nothing in the way of concerted movements, and the distinguishing efforts were mainly individual.

Of the four Lydney three-quarters, Hyam was much in the picture, and he looked after Crowther exceedingly well. Hyam has good pace, and the one occasion he broke away from his own line he looked a likely scorer had he gone on instead of kicking. W. Probert was sound in defence but had little to do in attack, and the same may be said of Lane and Pritchard.

Wellington, a useful scrum worker, but rather inclined to infringe the rules, did a lot of spoiling, but Ray Probert was not given much scope to display his cleverness in attack. Joe Davies, the County full-back, deputised efficiently for Kerwood, and at close quarters he effected some daring saves.

The Lydney forwards were well together in the loose rushes, and with better command over the ball in the loose would have given more trouble than they did. Taylor, Morris, Willis and Reed were conspicuous for some capital all-round work and Fletcher was useful in the open. The other players fitted in well, and the form altogether, according to a Lydney supporter, was far in advance of the showing against Berry Hill, thanks to the hard training indulged in during the week.

Gloucester can and will do better when the side settles down. The forwards lack the weight of former years, and, as was the case at Stroud, the heeling was not satisfactory. Even when the ball was secured in the scrum it came back too slowly. In the open the work was more encouraging, and it was refreshing to see the players in proper alignment for Voyce to finish off that one movement already referred to. Practice in handling should bring further successes in this direction.

There were occasions this afternoon when the footwork was very creditable, and Short, Hemming, and Pennington showed to advantage in the lines-out. Voyce, as dashing as ever, put in a lot of hard work, and did a lot of covering. But, as a whole, the forwards have something to pick up ere reaching the City's standard.

In the absence of Milliner, Howell came through creditably at scrum half. He experienced difficulty in always finding Millington with his service, but he was handicapped with the slow heeling. What I liked about Howell was his keenness in getting about the field and never-say-die spirit all through. With more experience of first-class football he ought to improve greatly all-round on his showing to-day. Millington was the sound and clever player as of yore, and it was not his fault that Gloucester did not get through the defence more than once.

The City three-quarter line accomplished one or two good things, but there was no outstanding player in the line. All did fairly well individually, and further games together should bring out a stronger attack all round. Thomas was efficient without attaining brilliance at full back, and for the present he is the best man available for the position.

I understand the County Union Executive will meet on Monday, after the conference between the Gloucester and Bristol Club Committees, to decide definitely the venue of the Maoris and Devon matches. The team to oppose Yorkshire on Thursday, September 23rd, will be selected next Saturday at Gloucester.

JC