

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1926

## FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. OXFORD UNIVERSITY

### LONDON CRITIC'S COMMENTS

Col. Trevor ("Daily Telegraph") was at Kingsholm on Thursday, and in his comments on the Gloucester-Oxford match remarked :

In a very interesting game we saw a clearly defined struggle between forwards and backs. For about a dozen minutes after the kick-off the University men were in the Gloucester half; they were not there again except to score. For the rest of the game, when once the Gloucester pack had found themselves, they dominated the situation, and subsequently the eventual winners realised that their best method of relieving this pressure was to get the ball into their three-quarter line, and to leave it to the speed and accuracy of its members to regain some of the lost ground.

As Oxford won by a comfortable margin of points we were yet again reminded of the fallacy of an old-time saying which used to be regarded as an axiom "Win forward and you will win the match." The Gloucester pack did everything that was humanly possible to win the game for their side. In the loose, in the tight, and at the line-out, they were superior to the Oxford forwards, while during more than two-thirds of the match they showed themselves adepts at getting the ball when it was put into the scrum.

But the hard-working men in the van were not well supported by their comrades in rear of them. The Gloucester half-backs were not quick enough in giving their centre three-quarter backs the ball, and these centre players did not treat their wing men kindly.

Far too often, if not usually, the bouts of passing in which the Gloucester back division indulged merely transferred the ball from one side of the field to the other. Still, it was a more serious mistake than this that they made which enabled their opponents to win the match. They gave their passes too slowly. Deliberation in pass-giving is a good fault, but it is a fault all the same. Two passes thus given, were intercepted, and 10 points to Oxford was the outcome of these two errors.

Oxford were not fully represented, but it was behind the scrummages, and not in it, that they lacked the help of established players. The lessons taught them by this game they are not likely to disregard. Their pack, if possible, should be stiffened.

Their backs all played quite well. Spragg was reliable as a full back, and, as has been said, he was not content to do merely defensive work. In attack the Oxford backs did creditably, for two especial reasons – they were unselfish and they drew the immediate opponent before parting with the ball. McCanlis was distinctly good, while Byers, who played in the centre of the three-quarter line in the second half, was helpful to his comrades. Abell did well, and Landale was to the fore in the few good rushes made by the Oxford forwards.

Though beaten, Gloucester struck me as being a side of considerable possibilities. The team is full of youngsters, real youngsters, for a few of them are only boys. The famous Tommy Voyce, who, by the way, played in quite his old form, may be trusted to get them into shape. The material is there. Doubtless he will point out to them the danger of over-zeal. One of them was off-side several times in this game, and he did not escape the watchful eye of the referee.