

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1926

RUGBY REFLECTIONS

(From W.B.'s Notebook)

OXFORD WIN AT KINGSHOLM

CITY FORWARDS IMPROVED DISPLAY AGAINST THE UNIVERSITY

Gloucester sustained their fourth defeat of the season (13 points to 3) against Oxford University on Thursday, and here again it was superior speed that beat the City team. The Kingsholm men had quite three-parts of the game, and for nearly half an hour in the second portion did practically all the attacking. One try, however, was the sole reward for their efforts, whilst the University, thanks to intercepted passes, had openings presented them to score two tries, both converted.

It was a disappointing result to home followers, but the crowd thoroughly enjoyed a spirited and keen game, if not providing the brilliant football witnessed two seasons ago. If Oxford had the pace of the home backs, the Gloucester forwards held a distinct advantage over their rivals, and their improvement in scrummage work and heeling was most encouraging.

All round the City pack displayed more cohesion, dash and determination than in any previous match, and Voyce was something like his old self. The captain worked tremendously hard all through, and though Berkeley and Landale held "a watching brief" for Oxford, the International was frequently prominent. Hemming (except for a tendency to get off-side), Short, Owner, and Foulkes were also distinguished, but the other players put plenty into their play, and, as previously remarked, the general form was most encouraging.

The Gloucester backs were afforded opportunities in attack on Thursday, but man for man they were beaten for speed, and could not get the desired opening. Milliner, back at scrum half, played a hard, strenuous game, and Hughes, who took Millington's place, gave his best display so far this season. He made a number of creditable bursts which nearly succeeded, and his tackling generally was exceedingly good.

The three-quarters did fairly well individually, and James and Stephens accomplished some smart things at centre, but the efforts were not quite strong enough to beat the defence. Loveridge made the mistake of leaving his wing man for the opposing centre, and Taylor (Oxford) was too often allowed to get clear. Fortunately for Gloucester the University player did not go all out, and when pressed he preferred to punt ahead. Thompson played keenly, as he always does, but got few real opportunities, and Spragg, at full back for the University, was very sound in defence.

Thomas, whose consistent form is one of the best features of the City team, again showed up splendidly, and he made no mistakes. He had no earthly chance of stopping either of the Oxford tries in the second half, as the pass beat him in each case.

Oxford are not a great side compared with the team of two years ago. The forwards are well equipped in the matter of speed and physique, but there was a long period in the second half when they were well beaten in all phases of play. There was no outstanding player in the back division, but as an attacking force they always looked more dangerous than the home men. Byers, changed from wing to centre in the second half, was one of the best three-quarters in the line, and should stand a good chance of obtaining his Blue. Oxford have some stiff tests on hand, but so far the results of matches at the rival Universities would suggest Cambridge as possessing the stronger combination.