

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1926

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. CHELTENHAM

CITY WIN IN DESPERATE AND UNSCIENTIFIC STRUGGLE

LOVERIDGE'S BRILLIANT SCORE

Capital weather conditions prevailed for Gloucester's return match with Cheltenham, and the Kingsholm ground looked in fine trim considering the damaging nature of the going in recent weeks. Gloucester played as selected, and Cheltenham made one change, Edwards coming into the three-quarter line for Riley, who was hurt in a match on Wednesday.

Teams : —

GLOUCESTER

BACK : L. Townsend.

THREE-QUARTERS : R. N. Loveridge (captain), R. James, J. Stephens, and S. R. Crowther.

HALF-BACKS : E. Goodwin and G. Thomas.

FORWARDS : E. Comley, H. Roberts, A. Danks, A. J. Owner, G. Foulkes, H. Pitt, L. Bartlett, and W. Cooper (Drybrook).

CHELTENHAM

BACK : W. Watson.

THREE-QUARTERS: W. Hart (captain), E. A. Moore, A. W. Edwards, and H. Goring.

HALF-BACKS : G. E. Vaughan and R. Stovold.

FORWARDS : W. Preece, R. Worgan, T. Harry, F. Fletcher, A. Coulston, D. Stayte, J. Hobbs, and V. Statham.

Referee : Mr. G. Fear (Somerset).

THE GAME

Tom Harry kicked off for Cheltenham before about 3,000 spectators, and the visitors were almost immediately awarded a penalty for off-side. Townsend cleverly fielded the kick and found touch at half-way.

Gloucester were next given a penalty from which little ground was made, until James set the home threes off. The ball went out to Crowther, who was effectively tackled. There was considerable excitement, assisted by the presence of a large contingent of Cheltenham supporters.

The home forwards gave early signs of exerting much dash in the loose. By means of short kicks to touch the visitors got a footing in the City's 25, when Edwards, when right in front of the posts, muffed a pass with the opening a splendid one.

A long dash by the home forwards quickly changed the scene of operations, and good play in the loose by the City forwards took them close to the visitors' line. The Cheltenham players covered their line splendidly, however, and Hart succeeded in clearing to mid-field.

Gloucester returned and James attempted a drop-kick which was too low and was stopped by a Cheltenham player. It appeared that some of the forwards on both sides were getting excited, for the referee had to interpose in one scramble.

So far the City had shown a better idea in handling, although they could make only slight progress against good tackling and marking. Stephens went too low with a drop at goal and the visitors relieved beyond the half-way line, only to be sent back by Townsend's touch-finder. Loveridge brought off a thrilling dash in which he cleverly beat Hart, but could not get past Watson.

For a short time the visitors were hard pressed, and after J. Stephens had failed with a drop-kick Gloucester crowded on all sail.

A long kick by Thomas was mis-fielded by Edwards, and the Gloucester players, following up smartly, rushed the defence, J. STEPHENS touching down for a try. Comley failed to convert.

The pace increased following this score and there was some long kicking on each side. The battle at the base of the scrum, between Goodwin and Stovold was extremely keen, and the Gloucester player more than kept his end up in getting the ball away smartly to his backs.

Harry was prominent in two good dribbles by the Cheltenham forwards but these were soon beaten off and Gloucester once again got a foothold in the visitors' half. Three Gloucester players were tackled successively in possession, and the visitors looked like making ground until Stephens found relief with a great kick to touch. Watson was conspicuous for a splendid bit of defensive play in which he got his side out of an awkward situation.

The crowd had now increased to 5,000 and they were rewarded with some exciting play in the last minutes of the first half. Cheltenham made desperate efforts to get through the City defence. Just before the whistle blew LOVERIDGE, well served by Thomas scored a fine try in the corner, and just as Stephens was about to take the kick the referee signalled for the interval.

HALF-TIME :

GLOUCESTER 2 tries (6 points)

CHELTENHAM Nil

Gloucester were quite worthy of their six points' lead, for the forwards had more than held their own in the tight and the loose, and the three-quarters always looked more promising in their advances, while they did twice as much handling as the Cheltenham quartette. Stephens provided the first feature of the second half with a splendid kick from the half-way line which found touch near the corner.

Scrappy play followed in the visitors' 25 for some minutes until Cheltenham got away and a mix-up in the City defence looked ominous until James took the ball into touch.

Loveridge intercepted a pass and broke clear. He punted over Watson's head, but the full back was guilty of a glaring act of obstruction, and a penalty was awarded. Comley's kick dropped short.

But for the excitement occasioned by the local rivalry, in which the spectators were the chief participants, there had been few periods of good play so far.

There was much desperate play, in which the players relied more on sheer strength to take them through the opposition. Inability to control a bouncing ball on the part of three of the City defenders let Cheltenham in, FLETCHER scrambling over the line for a try, which Hart converted.

The visiting forwards had now come more into the picture, but Gloucester pressed on the restart, and Goring had to concede a minor. Gloucester were awarded a penalty close in, but Thomas's drop kick was wide.

James next tried a drop at goal, but was equally unsuccessful, although he made amends the next moment by cleverly finding touch and assisting the City to keep on the attack.

Ultimately Cheltenham got away only to find Thomas a stumbling block. Gloucester returned, and LOVERIDGE produced one of the most brilliant scores seen on the ground. Catching a kick by the visitors' full-back, he turned round smartly near the touch-line and dropped a goal with his left foot.

RESULT :

GLO'STER 1 goal (d) 2 tries (10 pts.)

CHELTENHAM 1 goal (5 pts.)

REMARKS

Whatever prospects there were of sustained periods of good play were wiped off soon after the start, when it was seen that the rival packs were content to let mere physical strength have the ascendancy. Mr. Fear kept a good grip on the tendencies opened up by this style of play.

The best work of the game was the handling by the City threes, who were well served by Thomas and Goodwin. Although the smallest man physically in the team, Goodwin was a glutton for work, and quite had the better of matters with Stovold. Loveridge's drop goal in the last minute was the best individual feat in the match. Townsend played a good game at full-back, though beaten occasionally by the bounce of the ball when it was low.

Taking a leaf out of their opponents' book, the Gloucester forwards played the Cheltenham eight at the latter's own game, and succeeded most of the time, every man in the City pack playing his hardest both in the scrum and the loose. The ball came out to Goodwin more frequently than it did to Stovold.

Cheltenham were best served by their left wing, but their passing broke down badly on occasion, while at other times the close tackling of their opponents was too much for them. It was not a pretty game to watch, but as a good many spectators had seventy minutes of delirious shouting, somebody must have enjoyed it.