

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1926

FOOTBALL

HARLEQUINS 36 GLO'STER 7

CITY'S BIGGEST DEFEAT SINCE THE WAR

VISITORS' LACK OF SCORING ABILITY AND WEAK TACKLING

FINE GOAL KICKING BY STYLE

Gloucester paid their bi-annual visit to Twickenham to-day, where they met the Harlequins at the Rugby Union headquarters. Voyce and Hughes (on the injured list) and Thompson were prominent absentees from the City team, but the Harlequins were far more severely handicapped owing to the International trial at Exeter, where Hubbard (full back), Hamilton-Wickes (three-quarter), Worton and Laird (half-backs) and Wakefield were all engaged; whilst Price was also selected but could not play. Last week, with similarly weakened ranks, the Harlequins were beaten by the Old Merchant Taylors, and on this form Gloucester had a big chance of lowering the colours of the famous Londoners.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. Thomas.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. R. Crowther, J. Stephens, T. Millington, and R. N. Loveridge (capt.).

HALF-BACKS : R. Milliner and Roy James.

FORWARDS : L. E. Saxby, M. Short, H. Roberts, G. Foulkes, A. Danks, E. Comley, L. Bartlett, and H. Pitt.

HARLEQUINS

BACK : E. Taylor.

THREE-QUARTERS: H. C. Pattison, E. C. Hopkins, J. O. Malfroy, and J. C. Gibbs.

HALF-BACKS : V. G. Davies and H. B. Style.

FORWARDS : P. W. Adams, A. A. Moller, R. C. Hart, E. H. Fouraker, G. B. Still, H. V. Brodie, M. B. Watson, and J. S. Chick.

Referee : Mr. H. B. Cotter.

THE GAME

The weather was fine, though cold, but the early kick off militated against the attendance, and the vast enclosure, capable of holding 50,000 only contained a few hundred spectators when the game started. The Harlequins opened in businesslike fashion, and Style early initiated a passing bout, but Stephens intercepted, though he was not allowed to travel far.

Good work by Saxby and Danks gave Gloucester a good slice of ground. Play was rather scrappy and devoid of incident. Once Milliner got the ball away to James, but the latter was tackled in possession. With a flying kick Millington sent well down the field, but Gibbs got back and found touch with a nice kick. In subsequent play the Harlequins several times got the ball out to their backs, but there was no thrust in the attacks, and they were easily stopped.

The game hovered about mid-field for several minutes, with no advantage to either side. Profiting by weak passing by the Londoners, Stephens gathered and punted to near the line. Taylor misfielded, but got in a return to THOMAS on the 25 line. With a beautiful shot the City custodian dropped a lovely goal.

The Harlequins re-started, but Gloucester immediately broke away with loose footwork. The home team replied with passing, Pattison being sent away on the right wing. He beat Thomas, and looked all over a try-getter, when Crowther came across and effected a fine tackle.

From the ensuing scrum the Harlequins got possession, and weak tackling by Gloucester let in BRODIE for an easy try, which Style converted, giving the home team a point lead.

The Harlequins had the better of the exchanges on the re-start, the forwards dribbling well and the backs handling smartly. From an opening by Davies, Hopkins dashed clean up the centre, and passing to GIBBS the latter raced round and behind the posts. Style converted. The City's tackling was sadly at fault.

Again resuming the Gloucester forwards showed up with a dashing burst, and the home defence was seriously tested. The Harlequins cleared with a dribble, but the Gloucester backs broke away and Loveridge ran well. Henry, however, collared him close in. Immediately after the ball was got across to the right, where Crowther had a dash for the corner, but was tackled and thrown to touch.

Gloucester kept up the pressure, but two penalty kicks gave the Harlequins relief. Gloucester were warming to their work now, and Stephens, with a punt ahead, tested Taylor. The latter, however, cleared under difficulties. The City continued the attack. James broke through cleverly and gave a sharp pass to Stephens, but the transfer was ruled forward with the centre practically a certain scorer. Again a penalty saved the Harlequins, the kick enabling them to reach the centre.

From this point the Harlequins' backs shone with passing, and the Gloucester defence was tested. Gibbs was brought down after an opening by Hopkins, but a little later Style eluded several Gloucester players easily and, timing a good pass to CHICK, the latter scored near the posts for Style to add the goal points. On the play Gloucester did not deserve to be as much in arrears. It was the old complaint – lack of scoring ability behind and weak tackling.

On the re-start Gloucester made a visit to their opponents' end, but the Harlequins, with brilliant passing, covered half the length of the field, a knock-on spoiling a certain try. Gloucester played up strongly, but though going close they could not add to their score.

HALF-TIME :
HARLEQUINS 3 goals
GLOUCESTER 1 goal (d)

Gloucester had played disappointingly on the whole, though they had their chances of scoring. Behind, the Harlequins had the pace, and it was to this advantage mainly they held their substantial lead. From the kick-off Gloucester set up an attack, and Stephens had hard lines with a drop at goal, the ball hitting the post and rebounding. Taylor was collared in possession and a scrum followed five yards out.

The Harlequins carried this and with big kicking transferred play to the other end. Here Style cleverly got the ball to GIBBS on the short side of the scrum and with a brilliant sprint the wing man cleared the opposition and scored a fine try. Style missed the goal points.

Fourteen points down Gloucester struggled on and from passing Loveridge dashed down touch and cross-kicked over the line but Davies got back and touched down. Big punting helped the Harlequins considerably on the resumption but James and Thomas kept the home team out with useful returns. A big forward burst gave Gloucester the advantage, and Stephens with a sharp dash cut through the defence and passed to LOVERIDGE, who went hard for the line and scored. Millington just missed with his attempt at goal.

This was encouraging and Gloucester played up strongly after this but though having a good deal of the play, openings did not materialise. James was prominent with some capital work and Milliner also did well but another score came to the Harlequins. Some Gloucester passing breaking down, GIBBS slipped in and gathered. Sprinting away he ran round Thomas and scored behind the posts, for Style to convert.

Gloucester got very close on the restart but a penalty to the Harlequins brought relief. Back Gloucester came thanks to a strong run by Saxby, but the transfer went astray. The Harlequins' line was in danger for a minute but the forwards dribbled away from a scrum to the quarter line.

It was keen, hard football, but in point of cleverness the Harlequins were easily the superior side. Gloucester again worked close in only to see the home backs bring off a brilliant round of passing. Pattison went all out for the corner but Crowther just managed to throw him in touch. From a drop, the Harlequins started an attack, but this time Gibbs was smothered. The Londoners, however, were soon busy again. Davies intercepted at half-way and ran strongly, but the man to whom he passed was brought down. In the next scrum Style secured and gave GIBBS a neat pass for the latter to add another try. Style landed his fifth goal.

Gloucester were now hopelessly out of it as regards points, but they resumed pluckily, and with any finish might easily have scored, but the team was lacking in this necessary essential, and the Harlequins, throwing the ball about, were always dangerous. Chick led a sharp attack from footwork, and Gloucester failing to stop it ADAMS picked up and crossed near the posts. Style again converted. Before the end GIBBS scored his fourth try, the tackling being woefully weak. This time Style failed at goal.

RESULT :

HARLEQUINS 6 goals, 2 tries (36 pts.)

GLOUCESTER 1 goal (d), 1 try (7 pts.)

REMARKS

Gloucester were hopelessly outpointed in skill, pace and cleverness. Forward, the City did not do badly, and through their efforts they made several attacks, but behind Gloucester's combination was poor and the passing too slow and orthodox.

The tackling at times was dreadfully weak, and Gibbs, Hopkins, Style and Davies slipped the opposition with ease. There was no outstanding player on the Gloucester side.

Form all through was too bad for anything and about the weakest display the city have given for a long time. Thomas did more good fielding and kicking but was well beaten by Gibbs on several occasions.

GLOUCESTER A v. BROMSGROVE

CITY SECONDS TOO GOOD FOR VISITORS

FIVE TRIES CONVERTED

Owing to train delay, the match between Gloucester A and Bromsgrove, at Kingsholm, was half an hour late in starting. Bromsgrove lacked several regular players through injuries, and two substitutes, Shelley and Blackford, who played for them, were Gloucester men.

Teams : –

Gloucester A. – L. Townsend; L. Abbey, H. Boughton, R. Holford, and A. Robbins; E. Stephens and E. Goodwin; A. Rea (captain), G. R. Shaw, F. Russell, T. Hiam, J. Hemming, H. J. Ferris, W. Cooper, and F. Cooper (Berry Hill).

Bromsgrove. – E. N. Salmon; A. Rowbottom, G. F. Lambert, A. E. Blackford (Gordon League), and S. H. Halden; D. Murison and W. J. Morgan; T. H. Drury (captain), W. Jeffries, N. F. V. Shelley (Gloucester), D. Jones, L. A. Bates, E. M. Clarke, L. Hawkins, and C. A. Collett.

Referee : Rev. D. T. Jones (Parkend).

Bromsgrove kicked off and had the first scoring chance, when one of their forwards got well away and had only the full-back to beat. The visitor, however, dropped the ball, and then Goodwin set his right wing going, Robbins and Holford making a good run up to the Bromsgrove line.

A series of scrums and lines-out brought no gain to the City Seconds, and Salmon ultimately relieved with a fine kick to touch. Showing plenty of inclination to handle, the home threes opened out in good style, but bad passes spoiled promising movements until one raid by the left wing at top speed carried play near the Bromsgrove line. Abbey was twice nearly in, and it was left to Boughton to make a corkscrew run through the visiting defence and score a try near the posts. Boughton also converted.

Stephens next made a good effort, beating several opponents until he came to Salmon. So far little had been seen of the visitors as regards combination, their backs being mainly concerned in kicking to touch.

Following more pressure, the City were awarded a penalty, and Boughton's kick passed just on the wrong side of the post.

There was an amusing incident on the drop-out, the kick from which curled behind the Bromsgrove player who took it, the ball going over the dead ball line without being again touched.

Another deft movement by Boughton enabled Abbey to score a try, which Boughton converted.

Half-time :

Gloucester A 2 goals
Bromsgrove Nil

Stephens was the mainspring in several attacks by the City on the resumption, though it was Albert Rea who made the next score easily after Abbey had made a lightning run of 40 yards. Boughton converted. Rea and Holford each scored a try, Boughton majorising both.

Being pretty well held at all points, Bromsgrove yet defended gamely, but they were again outwitted when Boughton sent in Holford for the fifth try, which Boughton narrowly missed converting.

With a lead of 23 points the City were inclined to take matters rather easy, though there was no question that they were the superior side.

Holford got his third try after dodging through the visitors' rear lines, and Boughton converted.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ... 5 goals 1 try (28 pts.)
Bromsgrove Nil

REMARKS

After the strenuous tussle at Kingsholm last week it was a relief to see football in lighter vein this afternoon, for there were many amusing touches, many clever things, and just as many mistakes.

Considering that the City Seconds were immeasurably the better side, little comment on their play is necessary, except to say that Boughton, Holford, and Stephens and Goodwin were extra prominent amongst the home backs, while the City pack was streets ahead of the visitors' eight.

JC